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Title	Exploring the human dynamics affecting the intergenerational family farm transfer process in later life: A roadmap for future policy
Author(s)	Conway, Shane Francis
Publication Date	2017-11-26
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/6988

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Exploring the Human Dynamics Affecting the Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer Process in Later Life: A Roadmap for Future Policy

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Background Intergenerational family farm transfer is increasingly viewed as crucial to the survival, continuity and future prosperity of the agricultural sector, traditional family farm model and broader sustainability of rural society. While financial incentives designed to stimulate and entice this complex and highly topical phenomenon are important, there are many more facets to the farm succession and retirement decision-making process, which for the most part have been neglected. This has resulted in the formulation and implementation of largely unsuccessful policy strategies, which do not give proper and due consideration to the senior generation's attachment to their farm and occupation. One such key example happened in the Republic of Ireland, where an Early Retirement Scheme (ERS 3, June 2007), requested farmers retiring under the scheme to 'cease agricultural activity forever'. Essentially, older farmers were asked to revise their self-perceptions upon retirement. Challenging this one-dimensional approach, this research sets aside economic enticements and delves deeper into the mind-set and mannerism of farmers in later life to inform more appropriate, 'farmer-sensitive' farm transfer policy directions.

Aim This thesis consists of three interrelated journal articles. Each interconnected article explores the various human dynamics influencing and hindering the older generation's decision-making processes surrounding farm succession and retirement from a different theoretical base. Article 1 theoretically pioneers the use of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital to comprehend the psychodynamic and sociodynamic factors influencing the unwillingness and reluctance amongst older farmers towards relinquishing management and ownership of the family farm and retirement. Article 2 explores the micro-politics and hierarchical power dynamics at play within family farm households through the analytical lens of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power, and the exercise of symbolic violence. Finally, article 3 applies Graham Rowles' concept of insideness as a theoretical framework to present an insightful, nuanced analysis of the deeply embedded attachment older farmers have with their farms.

Methods A multi-method triangulation design, consisting of self-administered questionnaires (n=324) and an Irish adaptation of the International FARMTRANSFERS Survey (n=309) in conjunction with complementary Problem-Centred Interviews (n=19), is employed to obtain an in-depth, holistic understanding of the various facets governing the attitudes and behaviour patterns of older farmers towards the intergenerational family farm transfer process.

Findings Empirical findings indicate that the senior generation's reluctance and indeed resistance to alter the status quo of the existing management and ownership structure of the family farm is undoubtedly strong within the farming community. The reasons why older farmers fail to plan effectively and expeditiously for the future are expansive, and range from the potential loss of identity, status and power that may occur as a result of engaging in the process, to the intrinsic, multi-level relationship farmers have with their farms in later life. The common denominator however, identified in this study, is that intergenerational family farm transfer is about emotion. The central role of the human dynamics involved can override and stifle various collaborative farming policy efforts aimed at facilitating land mobility from one generation to the next.

Conclusion and Recommendations The study concludes by suggesting that financial enticements encouraging intergenerational farm transfer must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of interventions to deal with the personal and social loss that the senior generation of the farming community may experience upon transferring the farm. A series of recommendations are set forth geared specifically towards ensuring farmers' emotional wellbeing and quality of life in old age. Such recommendations are directed at policy makers and key stakeholders who have the means and ability to deliver future interventions and programmes that sensitively deal with problematic issues surrounding this complex area.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare this thesis is entirely my own and that I have acknowledged the writings, ideas and work of others where necessary within. I also declare that this thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of another academic degree at this or any other university. Furthermore, I have not knowingly allowed another to copy my work.

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Statement of Contribution

The candidate was responsible for the design, data collection, analysis and write-up of each of the three articles conducted in this research, as well as the construction and completion of the compilation thesis. The supervisory team and Graduate Research Committee advised and provided support in carrying out the research.

Funding

Funding for this study was provided by the National University of Ireland, Galway's College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies Galway Doctoral Research Scholarship Scheme (2013-2017), the National University of Ireland, Galway, College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, Postgraduate Research Travel Bursary and the Geographical Society of Ireland Postgraduate Fieldwork/Travel Award Bursary.

Acknowledgements

The writing of this PhD thesis has been one of the most significant, but rewarding challenges I have ever had to face. Whilst it has not been an easy and straightforward journey, I am extremely fortunate to have been in such great company throughout the last four years.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my research supervisors, Dr John McDonagh and Dr Maura Farrell, for their consistent and invaluable support, enthusiasm and guidance throughout the process of this thesis. It has been an absolute pleasure to be your student and I am forever grateful to you both. I look forward to collaborating with you again in the future.

Many thanks are also extended to my Graduate Research Committee members, Dr Marie Mahon and Dr Therese Conway at the National University of Ireland, Galway and Anne Kinsella, Senior Research Officer at the Teagasc Agricultural Economics and Farms Surveys Department, who have been excellent academic mentors and sources of encouragement at various stages of the research process.

The PhD research process led to me to meet farmers from across the four provinces of Ireland. Thank you to all the participants who very generously took time out from their busy schedules to provide inestimable data and information for this research. Their candour and willingness to open up and share their stories with me was humbling. This thesis would not have been possible without you all.

I am immensely grateful to Teagasc (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland), for their assistance with this research, in particular for allowing me to conduct surveys with their farming clients.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff and fellow PhD students in the Discipline of Geography at the National University of Ireland, Galway for their words of advice and intellectual support throughout this research process. In

particular, I would like to thank Dr Siubhán Comer who assisted me generating the maps in the thesis.

The wider academic community have also been incredibly supportive throughout this research process. I appreciate the constructive feedback and words of encouragement that I have received during the peer-review publication process and at the various conferences I presented at, both in Ireland and further afield.

I was fortunate enough to spend 12 weeks as a Visiting Scholar in the Agricultural Issues Center at the University of California, Davis, U.S.A., during the academic period September to December 2015. For this, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Professor Daniel Sumner and colleagues for an enriching experience.

Thanks to the International FARMTRANSFERS project's Co-Directors, Professor Matt Lobley, at the Centre for Rural Policy Research, University of Exeter, United Kingdom and John R. Baker, Attorney at Law at the Beginning Farmer Centre, Iowa State University, U.S.A. for granting me permission to become involved in the research collaboration.

On a personal note, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to my dear parents, Marie and Liam, for their constant love, support, patience and understanding throughout the process of this thesis. Many thanks also to my brothers, Keith and Eric and sister, Nicole, for their continued interest in my studies and for keeping my life interesting! My extended circle of aunts, uncles and cousins, have also been very supportive throughout this endeavour. This work stands on all of your shoulders.

To my friends, near and far, you know who you are. I am thankful for your support and for giving me the time and space to complete this work.

Finally, to Rachel, thank you for always believing in me. You have been an inspiration.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to you Mam. Without your unwavering love and ever-present guidance and strength throughout my life, especially during testing times, I would not have been able to get to where I am today. A line in a thesis will never be enough to thank you for how much you have sacrificed for me to get this far, but I hope it goes some of the way to letting you know just how appreciative I am.

Dissemination of Study Findings

Publications

International Peer Reviewed Publications:

- Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2017) Uncovering Obstacles: The Exercise of Symbolic Power in the Complex Arena of Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 54, 60-75. doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.06.007
- Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2016) Cease Agricultural Activity Forever? Underestimating the Importance of Symbolic Capital. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 44, 164-176. doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.01.016

Conference Publication:

- Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2016) Intergenerational Family Farm transfer: An Insight into the Human Side. 12th European International Farming Systems Association (IFSA) Symposium, Harper Adams University, United Kingdom.

Academic Press Publication:

- Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2017) Uncovering Obstacles to Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer. *Teagasc TResearch: Autumn 2017*, 12(3), 32-33. (see Appendix N)
- Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2016) Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer - The Human Side. *Teagasc TResearch: Summer 2016*, 11(2), 38-39. (see Appendix N)

Policy Brief Publication:

- Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2016) Transferring the Family Farm: The Human Element. National University of Ireland Galway, Whitaker Institute Policy Brief Series No:11. (see Appendix O)

Book Chapter Publication:

- McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Conway S. (2017) The Role of Small-scale Farms and Food Security. In: Bhat, R. (Eds.), Sustainability Challenges in the Agrofood Sector, Wiley Blackwell, pp. 33-47.

Conference Presentations

International Conferences:

- Conway, S. F. (2017) Growing Old on the Farm: Investigating the Human Side of Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer through the Lens of Symbolic Capital. 80th Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., 27-30 July 2017.
- Conway, S. F. and Kinsella, A. (2017) Intergenerational Transfer of the Irish Family Farm: The Older Generation's Perspective. XXVII European Society for Rural Sociology (ESRS) Conference, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland, 24-27 July 2017.
- Conway, S. F. (2016) Fade Away or Keep Going? Investigating the Human Factors that Influence Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer through the Lens of Symbolic Capital. RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2016, Royal Geographical Society, London, United Kingdom, 30 August-2 September 2016.

- Conway, S. F. (2016) Intergenerational Transfer of the Irish Family Farm: Underestimating the Importance of Symbolic Capital. XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, 10-14 August 2016.

International Seminars:

- Conway, S. F. (2015) The Intergenerational Transfer of the Irish Family Farm and its Importance to Farm Viability and Rural Sustainability. Law and Rural Livelihoods Seminar, King Hall, University of California, Davis, U.S.A., 9 November 2015.
- Conway, S. F. (2015) Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer in Ireland. International Farm Transition Network (IFTN), Farm Succession Coordinator Training Programme, University of Wisconsin, Madison, U.S.A., 21-23 September 2015.

National Conferences:

- Conway, S. F. (2017) Blood, Sweat and Tears: Symbolic Power and the Insidious Pervasiveness of Symbolic Violence in the Family Farm Transfer Process. 49th Conference of Irish Geographers (CIG), University College Cork, Republic of Ireland, 4-6 May 2017.
- Conway, S. F. (2016) What Lies Beneath: Investigating the Human Dynamics affecting Family Farm Succession and Retirement through the Lens of Symbolic Capital. 48th Conference of Irish Geographers (CIG), St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, Republic of Ireland, 5-7 May 2016.
- Conway, S. F. (2015) Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer: Symbolic Capital as the Key to Reluctance. 47th Conference of Irish Geographers (CIG), Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 21-24 May 2015.

- Conway, S. F. (2015) The Intergenerational Transfer of the Irish Family Farm: Underestimating the Importance of Symbolic Capital. 25th Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium (Environ 2015), Institute of Technology Sligo, Republic of Ireland, 8-10 April 2015.

National Seminars:

- Conway, S. F. (2017) Developmental Restrictions: Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer through the Lens of Symbolic Power and Symbolic Violence. Geography Postgraduate Research Symposium, Session 1, Geography Seminar Room, National University of Ireland, Galway, Republic of Ireland, 26 April 2017.
- Conway, S. F. (2016) Dying with their Boots on: Understanding the Human Factors that Influence Farm Succession and Retirement through the Lens of Symbolic Capital. Geography Postgraduate Research Symposium, Session 2: Rural Research Cluster, Old Moore Institute, National University of Ireland, Galway, Republic of Ireland, 15 April 2016.
- Conway, S. F. (2016) Transferring the Family Farm to the Next Generation: The Role of Symbolic Capital. Natural and Human Heritages, Spring Lunchtime Lecture Series, The Studio, Town Hall Theatre, Woodquay, Galway, Republic of Ireland, 29 January 2015.
- Conway, S. F. (2015) The Intergenerational Transfer of the Irish Family Farm: Underestimating the Importance of Symbolic Capital. Geography Postgraduate Research Symposium, Session 2: Rural Research Cluster, Old Moore Institute, National University of Ireland, Galway, Republic of Ireland, April 2015.

Poster Presentations:

- Conway, S. F. (2016) National Versus Global: Ireland's Involvement in the International FARMTRANSFERS Project. Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change Annual Research Day, Hardiman Research Building, National University of Ireland, Galway, Republic of Ireland, 13 April 2016. (see Appendix P)

- Conway, S. F. (2016) Cease Agricultural Activity Forever? Underestimating the Importance of Symbolic Capital. Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change Annual Research Day, Hardiman Research Building, National University of Ireland, Galway, Republic of Ireland, 13 April 2016. (see Appendix P)

- Conway, S. F. (2015) Ireland's Involvement in the International FARMTRANSFERS Project. Teagasc / RDS Farm Succession and Inheritance Conference, Royal Dublin Society (RDS), Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Republic of Ireland, 19 May 2015.

- Conway, S. F. (2015) The Intergenerational Transfer of the Irish Family Farm: Underestimating the Importance of Symbolic Capital. Teagasc/RDS Farm Succession and Inheritance Conference, Royal Dublin Society (RDS), Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Republic of Ireland, 19 May 2015.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an insightful, nuanced analysis of the various human dynamics that influence and hinder the intergenerational family farm transfer decision-making process from the perspective of the senior generation. This research represents what, in all probability, is the first geographical / sociological study carried out on in this field of research in the Republic of Ireland since the late Dr. Patrick (Packie) Commins' preliminary investigation into the issue in the early 1970s (Commins, 1973; Commins and Kelleher, 1973).

In this chapter, the overall research background and rationale will be described followed by an overview of the three separate, yet interrelated journal articles which make up the core of this thesis.

1.1 Intergenerational Family Farm Transfer

It is a worldwide policy mantra that the survival, continuity and future prosperity of the agricultural sector, traditional family farm model and broader sustainability of rural society ultimately depends on an age-diverse farming population (Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Lobley and Baker, 2012; Gill, 2013; Nuthall and Old, 2017). With the steady decline in the number of young farm families reported as being key in the demoralization of rural communities in which the farm is located (Beale, 2000; Ball and Wiley, 2005; Vare et al., 2005; Goeller, 2012), it is increasingly clear that a major challenge presents itself in the area of intergenerational family farm transfer. In fact, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan, recently highlighted that a priority for future CAP reforms must focus on generational renewal (European Commission, 2017).

Intergenerational farm transfer is a multifaceted process that encompasses three distinct but interrelated processes: succession, inheritance and retirement (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Succession is viewed as managerial control which is

gradually relinquished; retirement is associated with the owner withdrawing from active participation in the business of the farm, while inheritance is the final stage when all of the business assets are legally transferred to the successor (Errington, 2002). Whilst conceptually separate, these processes are linked, with succession seen as the ‘mirror image’ of retirement; as the new generation succeeds, the old generation retires (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Errington and Lobley 2002; Uchiyama et al., 2008, Lobley, 2010; Lobley et al., 2010). The terms ‘succession’ and ‘retirement’ will thus be used interchangeably throughout.

1.2 The Older Generation’s Reluctance to Step Aside

The family farm is an enduring symbol of rurality, with many farmers throughout the world being able to trace their family’s occupancy of the farm back ‘three generations or more’ (Lobley et al., 2012, p. 11). Maintaining family farm control and ownership is therefore central to many farm households (Gasson and Errington 1993, Mishra and El-Osta, 2008; Glover 2010), resulting in a deeply ingrained ‘rural ideology’ that prioritizes the process of handing over the farm within the family (Barclay et al., 2005; Lobley et al., 2010; Gill 2013; Nuthall and Old, 2017). Furthermore, a longing to ‘keep the name on the land’ (Potter and Lobley, 1992; Price and Conn, 2012) has focused a ‘clear recognition of the cyclical nature of inheritance and farming’ (Gill, 2013, p. 85). Farmers have their farms because of the actions of their ancestors; therefore, the responsibility of passing on what they inherited is a profoundly entrenched process and tradition (ibid). Indeed, Potter and Lobley (1996) consider farming to be ‘the most hereditary of professions’ (p. 286).

Drawing on family farm transfer literature from the Republic of Ireland and further afield (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Kimhi and Lopez, 1999; Gillmor, 1999; Foskey, 2005; Bika, 2007; Lobley et al., 2010; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Barclay et al., 2012; Bogue, 2013; Nuthall and Old, 2017), it is clear that in spite of the deep-rooted desire to keep the farm in the family, there is considerable reluctance and resistance amongst the older generation towards relinquishing managerial duties and ownership to the next generation. Consequently, a significant proportion of farmers abstain from transferring the farm while alive. This phenomenon has

resulted in extraordinary socio-economic challenges for young people aspiring to embark on a career in farming (Kirkpatrick, 2013; Cush and Macken-Walsh, 2016), with adverse impacts not only on the development trajectory of individual family farms but also the production efficiency and economic growth of the Agri-Food sector as a whole (Gillmor, 1999; Errington and Lobley, 2002; ADAS, 2004; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Lobley, 2010; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Bogue, 2013).

1.3 ‘Greying’ of the Farming Population

A potential difficulty in passing on the legacy of the family farm therefore, is the disconnect between the younger generation readiness to begin their career in farming, and their parents lack of preparedness to hand over the farm (Keating, 1996). According to Keating (1996) ‘while some farmers plan to retire in their late sixties, many do not expect to retire at all’ (p. 414). The lack of correspondence between the senior generation’s willingness to step aside and the younger generation's inclination to take over, is seen as one of the reasons why the farming community consists of a farm population with a high age profile (Mishra and El-Osta, 2007; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015). Global demographic trends reveal an inversion of the age pyramid with those aged 65 years and over constituting the fastest growing sector of the farming community (Zagata and Sutherland, 2015). In Europe, preliminary results from Eurostat's most recent Farm Structure Survey indicate that 6% of farmers were aged 35 and under in 2013, while over 55% were aged 55 and older (European Commission, 2013; European Commission, 2015). Furthermore, Eurostat's Farm Structure Survey highlights that for each farmer younger than 35 years of age, there were 9 farmers older than 55 years (European Commission, 2012; European Commission, 2015). The situation in the Republic of Ireland is closely analogous to that of its European counterparts; in 2010, only 6.2% of Irish landowners were under 35 years of age whilst 51.4% were over 55 years old (CSO, 2012). Between 2000 and 2010, those over 65 years increased by 31%, while those within the 55 to 65 age bracket increased by 26%, with a 52.8% reduction in the amount of farmers aged less than 35 years recorded (ibid).

This 'greying' of the farming workforce is reported to have major implications for government policy (Rogers et al., 2013), raising concerns about the economic, social and environmental sustainability and viability of an ageing farming population (Caskie et al., 2002; ADAS, 2004; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Older farmers are reported to be less competitive in the current market place because they are slower to adopt new innovative agricultural technologies (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011), alongside arguments that many are unwilling to recognize or accept their physical limitations (Reed, 1998; Peters et al., 2008).

1.4 Farm Transfer Policy Interventions

In response to rigidity in the agrarian system, the policy environment in the Republic of Ireland has explored various methods of financially stimulating and enticing intergenerational farm transfer over the past four decades. These included several short-lived Early Retirement Schemes (ERS) designed to encourage older farmers generating low returns to retire from the industry, all of which yielded nothing like the required result (Commins, 1973; Commins and Kelleher 1973; Ryan, 1995; Gillmor, 1999; Bika, 2007; Leonard et al., 2017). At present, there is a concerted effort to ensure the most tax efficient means of transferring ownership and wealth of farms (Meehan, 2012; Leonard et al., 2017), however despite such measures, the reluctance of older farmers to exit or retire from the farming sector to facilitate young farmers who have a desire to start up persists (Bogue, 2013).

Understanding when to relinquish control of the family farm can be difficult to recognise for many farmers, in that few other businesses generate the emotional connections that farming does (Commins, 1973; Yarwood and Evans 2006; Rogers et al., 2013). Kirkpatrick's (2013) study in the U.S.A. explains that in many cases the older farmer's 'sense of place and purpose attached to the family farm' supersedes any fiscal incentives encouraging intergenerational farm transfer (p. 4). As such, this indicates the overwhelming significance of lifestyle over profit (Price and Conn, 2012). Recent research conducted in the Republic of Ireland, touched on this, alluding to the fact that 'apart from the economic driver of payments retaining elderly farmers on land, there are also psychological drivers involved' and

‘addressing the issue of low levels of mobility must also take cognisance of these psychological barriers’ (NRN, 2013, p. 6). This research came 40 years after Commins, (1973) and Commins and Kelleher (1973) first stressed that it is essential to initially investigate and understand the human factors dictating the behaviour patterns and perceptions of those directly affected by intergenerational farm transfer, before any new scheme dealing with the process is developed and put in place. However, to date, such recommendations have largely been ignored, resulting in the formulation and implementation of mostly unsuccessful farm transfer-policy strategies, which have not given proper and due consideration to older farmer’s emotional attachment to their farm and occupation. For example, the eligibility requirements for farmers entering the most recent Early Retirement Scheme for farmers (ERS 3, June, 2007), included that: ‘Persons intending to retire under the Scheme shall cease agricultural activity forever’ (DAFM, 2007) (p. 1-3 of this policy document can be found in Appendix A). Essentially, farmers were being asked to revise their self-perceptions upon retirement. Cush and Macken-Walsh (2016) argue that such land mobility policy measures are ‘socio-culturally undesirable to landowners’ (p. 6).

1.5 Research Rationale

The human dynamic of intergenerational family farm transfer is currently being disregarded by policy, with little value placed on the notion that farming is not just a job or something driven by a desire to make money; it is a passion and a lifestyle (Rogers et al., 2013). A byzantine mix, whereby the already problematic economic business dimension is further complicated by a more complex emotional aspect. The acceptability of retirement schemes from farming for example is likely to be a personal dilemma for many elderly farmers particularly as they adjust to a major change in their occupational role (Commins, 1973; Gillmor 1999). Price and Evans (2009) add that as farmers are so ‘deeply rooted in the cultural and physical spaces of farming’ they ‘cannot imagine a different way of life’ (p. 6). It is somewhat naïve therefore of policy makers and practitioners not to consider the potent mass of emotional values attached to the farm and farming occupation for older farmers

‘beyond the economic’ (Pile, 1990, p. 147). It is in probing these issues further that this article-based thesis is based.

1.6 Article Research Questions, Aims and Objectives

This thesis consists of three interrelated journal articles, two of which have been published in the *Journal of Rural Studies* and one that is under review in the *International Journal of Agricultural Management* (see Table 1.1). Each article explores the complex human dynamics influencing the decision-making processes surrounding farm succession and retirement, from a different theoretical base, whilst maintaining the same foci. The brief account of each article that follows will be helpful in understanding the empirical setting, aims and objectives and research questions discussed in each.

Article 1	<i>Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2016) Cease agricultural activity forever? Underestimating the importance of symbolic capital, Journal of Rural Studies, 44, 164–176. doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.01.016</i>
Article 2	<i>Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2017) Uncovering obstacles: The exercise of symbolic power in the complex arena of intergenerational family farm transfer, Journal of Rural Studies, 54, 60-75. doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.06.007</i>
Article 3	<i>Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2017) Till death do us part: Exploring the farmer-farm relationship in later life through the lens of ‘Insideness’, International Journal of Agricultural Management. (under review)</i>

Table 1.1: Overview of the Journal Articles

1.6.1 Article 1 Overview: Cease agricultural activity forever? Underestimating the importance of symbolic capital

While financial incentives designed to confront the global demographic trend of an ageing farming population and low levels of land mobility (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Bogue, 2013; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015) are important, they are not designed to deal with specific emotional and social challenges facing ageing farmers (Rogers et al., 2013). Article 1 centres on the notion that agricultural policy's undue emphasis on economic aspects of intergenerational family farm transfer has led to an overly simplified view of the components influencing the decision-making process, resulting in a clear lack of understanding of the views of elderly farmers, on their concerns, fears, needs and future plans. Drawing on two previously disparate literature (transferring the family firm and family farm), article 1 presents an insightful, nuanced analysis of the psychodynamic and sociodynamic factors influencing the unwillingness and reluctance amongst older farmers towards relinquishing management and ownership of the family farm. The psychodynamic perspective emphasizes the interplay of unconscious emotional processes in determining human thought, feelings, and behaviour which ultimately shape one's personality (Bernstein et al., 2006). Jarvis (2000) explains that the psychodynamic theory 'ignores the trappings of science' and instead focuses on trying to 'get inside the head of individuals' in an attempt to make sense of their experiences and how they see the world (p.35). While psychodynamic emotions concern an individual's inner world and specifically their sense of self, sociodynamic emotions are seen as 'dynamic systems that emerge from the interactions and relationships in which they take place' (Mesquita and Boiger, 2014, p. 298). The need for such penetrative, policy relevant, research in this field is imperative, particularly as this issue has not only a national and European dimension, but a global one.

In addition to the policy-related contribution, article 1 theoretically pioneers the use of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital to comprehend the complex human elements governing the attitudes and behaviour patterns of older farmers facing the prospect of succession and retirement. Using this concept, with associated characteristics of honour, prestige, position and status, this article contributes to a more discerning picture of the pervasive role emotional ties to the farming

occupation play on the decision-making process by delving into the mind-set of the older generation. Such an understanding also helps determine whether farm transfer policy and indeed society as a whole, is ‘underestimating the importance of symbolic capital’ when discussing this complex issue.

1.6.2 Article 2 Overview: Uncovering obstacles: The exercise of symbolic power in the complex arena of intergenerational family farm transfer

The limited uptake and success of previous early retirement schemes in the Republic of Ireland, in addition to the fact that entry to farming through channels other than inheritance is rare due to both the limited availability and the high cost of farmland (Hennessy and Rehman, 2007) are prevalent concerns within Irish policy discourses. This scenario indicates that existing and future policies and mechanisms designed to incentivize and stimulate intergenerational farm transfer need to be rectified to encourage increased uptake and participation. Article 2 centres on the need for a detailed understanding of the micro-politics and hierarchical power dynamics at play within family farm households to confront this issue. More specifically, article 2 exposes the various defence mechanisms and tactics employed by the older generation to avoid and deter the succession process from occurring.

Article 2 explores this anomaly through the analytical lens of Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power, and the exercise of symbolic violence, an invisible, non-physical mode of dominance (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Moi (1991) explain that ‘powerful possessors of symbolic capital (i.e. the older generation in this case) become the wielders of symbolic power, and thus of symbolic violence’ (p. 1022), enabling them to impose ideas and values (often through subconscious means) onto the thoughts and perceptions of a dominated social group (i.e. the younger generation), often in a covert fashion (Bourdieu 1991). Similar to the approach employed in article 1, a plethora of family firm literature pertaining to the manner in which the incumbents galvanize his or her controlling position and dominance as head of the business is drawn on to help understand this fraught and complex conundrum further, and to determine how such

issues can be prevented or resolved. By providing an in-depth insight into the hidden ‘workings’ of symbolic violence through analysis and real-life examples, article 2 conceptualizes and makes visible a veiled form of everyday domination within farm households.

1.6.3 Article 3 Overview: Till death do us part: Exploring the farmer-farm relationship in later life through the lens of ‘Insideness’

Article 3 brings into focus the suitability and appropriateness of previous and existing farm transfer policy strategies in the Republic of Ireland. Given that existing research in the field has yet to thoroughly describe or explain the level of emotional attachment placed on the farm, article 3 aims to generate a comprehensive insight into the deeply embedded relationship older, active and productive members of the farming community have with their farms and its embodied contents, developed over several generations (i.e. land, farmhouse, livestock); emulating Shucksmith and Hermann’s (2002), contention of the need to examine ‘farmers’ own ways of seeing the world’ (p. 39).

Employing Rowles’ (1983) concept of ‘insideness’ as a theoretical framework, article 3 probes the subjective experiences of farmers in later life to unearth a layer of understanding and attachment, both implicit and explicit, between farmer and farm. Rowles (1990) explains that insideness involves ‘an intimate involvement with a place that is grounded in personal history and qualitatively differentiates this place from space outside’ (p. 107). The theory has three dimensions; physical, social and autobiographical. Physical insideness is created by an intimate awareness and knowledge of the physical environment where one lives. The second element, social insideness, is created by being known and knowing others in the community as well as sharing community values. Autobiographical insideness goes to a deeper level and represents the lived memories and essences of the place. By explicitly exploring Rowles’s three interrelated constructs of place attachment amongst the senior generation of the farming community, article 3 determines the degree to which the farmer-farm bond can affect these individual’s ability to come to terms

with the challenges and changes brought about by the ‘twin process’ of succession and retirement.

1.7 Farm Transfer Policy Implications

This research is very appropriately timed, because ‘for too long the policy debate has been conducted with little reference to farmers or to their view of the world’ (Winter, 1997, p. 377). Consequently, this article-based thesis contributes to current needs and priorities within policy and research on family farm transfer, by setting aside financial enticements to present a detailed insight into the human side of farm succession and retirement from the perspective of the senior generation of the farming community. The sheer number of family farms, their aggregate impact on the Agri-Food industry, and the potential economic and social losses that may occur as a consequence of the senior generations widely reported unwillingness to engage in intergenerational family farm transfer (Foskey, 2005; Bika, 2007; Loblely et al., 2010), demand a deeper probing into the mind-set and mannerism of older farmers. An in-depth understanding and appreciation of the various facets governing the attitudes and behaviour patterns of older farmers towards intergenerational farm transfer is paramount. This will aid in the modification of existing policies and/or the development and delivery of novel strategies that sensitively deal with problematic issues surrounding this complex area, whilst also ensuring farmers’ emotional wellbeing and quality of life in old age. These ideas are aimed at policy makers and key stakeholders who have the means and ability to bring about such change. Consequently, given that farm succession is often less than satisfactory (Burton and Fischer 2015; Nuthall and Old, 2017), this article-based thesis has global relevance and will be of particular interest to countries throughout the European Union where the age profile of the farming population and the rate of succession and retirement have been matters of concern and unease for decades (Commins, 1973; Commins and Kelleher 1973; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Gilmor, 1999; Bika, 2007; NRN, 2011, 2013; Bogue, 2013; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015; Leonard et al., 2017).

1.8 Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter has served to provide a contextual footing for the reader and has indicated the direction and purpose of this article-based thesis. Chapter 2 further develops the concepts that underpin the research by reviewing pertinent family farm and family firm literature and provides a brief overview of relevant Irish farm transfer policy. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical frameworks adopted, while chapter 4 describes the methodological approach employed in this study along with a profile of the study area. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are each dedicated towards the three interrelated journal articles which make up the spine of this thesis. Chapter 8 presents the overall research findings arising from the study and generates recommendations directed at policy makers and key stakeholders who have the means and ability to deliver future interventions and programmes for older farmers and their families. The directions for future research are also discussed.

Chapter 2

**Transferring the Family Farm and
Family Firm Literature Review**

Chapter 2

Transferring the Family Farm and Family Firm Literature Review

2.1 The Family Farm Model

Despite being in an era of ‘changes in agricultural support regimes, challenging economic environments, and socio-cultural changes that may erode the social standing of farming’ (Whitehead et al., 2012, p. 220), the vast majority of farm business globally remain family-owned and operated (Brookfield and Parsons, 2007; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Barclay et al., 2012; Gill, 2013; Nuthall and Old, 2017). In fact, the recent resurgence in demand from young people for education and training in agriculture in the Republic of Ireland and beyond indicates a continued interest in pursuing farming as a career (Teagasc, 2011; Whitehead et al., 2012; Baker, 2012; Goeller, 2012; McDonald et al. 2014; Cush and Macken-Walsh, 2016). Moreover, programmes encouraging farm transfer in the U.S.A. report that they have ‘approximately 20 beginning farmers for every existing farmer’ (Whitehead et al., 2012, p. 216). The prevalence of the traditional family farm model therefore remains of totemic importance (Lobley et al., 2010), resulting in a growing body of research among rural geographers and sociologists dedicated towards exploring their uniqueness, the challenges that they face, and the factors that affect their survival.

There is no universally agreed definition of the family farm however (Lowder et al., 2014), what is documented varies widely depending on country, context, author, and political motivation (Garner and de la O Campos. 2014). This study follows Gasson and Errington (1993), in highlighting that a comprehensive definition of family farming encompasses the following criteria:

- Farm business ownership is combined with managerial control in the hands of business principals.
- These principals are related by kinship or marriage.

- Family members (including these business principals) provide capital to the farm business.
- Family members including business principals do farm work.
- Farm business ownership and managerial control are transferred between the generations with the passage of time.
- The family lives on the farm.

This definition is consistent with the purpose of this research, as it brings to light the reliance and ever-increasing importance of transferring managerial control and ownership of the family farm business from one generation to the next (Pesquin, et al., 1999; Lobley and Baker, 2012). Intergenerational family farm transfer, encompassing three separate yet interrelated processes of succession, retirement and inheritance (Gasson and Errington, 1993) is an integral facet of farm management. The process is instrumental in ensuring the sustained viability of individual family farms (Weiss, 1999; Wheeler et al., 2012; Gill, 2013), in addition to shaping the future structure of rural communities and the broader Agri-Food sector (Pesquin et al. 1999; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Gill, 2013). An infusion of ‘new blood’ into the industry by means of efficient and effective intergenerational family farm transfer, also represents ‘the renewal of the farm’ (Lobley and Baker, 2012, p. 10), that can potentially act as a helpful corrective in addressing widespread concerns over the global demographic trend of an ageing farming population (Caskie et al., 2002; ADAS, 2004; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Population imbalance and eventual rural depopulation is a serious social concern (ADAS, 2004), with many older farmers throughout the world increasingly experiencing social isolation (Alston, 2004, 2010; Rogers et al., 2013).

2.2 The ‘Twin Process’ of Succession and Retirement

Succession in family owned business is an explicit process by which management control and ownership of the firm is transferred from one generation to the next (Sharma et al., 2003; Palliam et al., 2011; Boyd et al., 2014). The process is seen as the ‘mirror image’ of retirement; as the younger generation takes over, the senior

generation withdraw (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Uchiyama et al., 2008; Loble, 2010; Lange et al., 2011). The terms ‘succession’ and ‘retirement’ will thus be used interchangeably throughout this article-based thesis. Succession is reported to be the preeminent test of success for the family business (Brockhaus, 2004; Glover, 2011), with considerable practical implications for the continuity and survival of the firm within family networks (Christensen, 1953; Handler, 1990; Handler, 1994; Palliam et al., 2011).

For succession in the family business to materialize, there must be three fundamental components: the senior family business owner and leader, hereafter referred to as the incumbent, who hands over the leadership role of the business; a successor, who takes over; and a mechanism by which the transition process takes place (Sharma et al., 2001; Whitehead et al., 2012). Additionally, succession is not an event that occurs at one point in time, but rather, is an ongoing process that begins well in advance of when the younger generation is expected to take control (Bjuggren and Lund, 2001), which in turn allows for a fair and gradual transfer of managerial duties, decision-making responsibilities and assets of the family business to the next generation (Kimhi and Lopez, 1999; Steier and Miller, 2010; Lange et al., 2011; Boyd et al., 2014). Errington (2002) refers to the successive stages involved in the family farm transfer process as like moving up different rungs of a ladder. The universally applicable ‘succession ladder’ analogy begins with the younger generation being responsible for primarily technical decisions moving on through tactical, strategic, supervisory and finally, most importantly of all, control of the ‘purse strings’ (Hicks et al., 2012).

Family firm literature highlights that managing this process is a challenging task however, that invariably inflicts a variety of extensive changes simultaneously on the family business (Lansberg, 1988; Handler 1992; Sharma et al. 2001). According to Lansberg (1988) ‘family relationships need to be realigned, traditional patterns of influence are redistributed, and long-standing management and ownership structures must give way to new structures’ (p. 121). These monumental adjustments in the roles, structure, organizational goals, governance and culture of the existing business tend to be anxiety provoking and conjure the necessity to find answers and solutions to the many uncertainties surrounding the future needs of

both the enterprise and the family involved (Lansberg, 1988; Steier and Miller, 2010). Indeed, succession is reported as one of most complex management challenges a family business will ever face due to the emotional issues that arise (Chua et al., 2003; Palliam et al., 2011). Family farm literature also reports succession to be a period of significant turmoil, both financially and emotionally, for farm households if not adequately addressed (Keating and Munro, 1989; McGonigal, 1991; Burton and Walford, 2005). Gill (2013) notes that ‘every decision regarding succession is made within a web of competing responsibilities: the past, and the strong historical connection a family may have to the land; the present, in which environmental, social and economic pressures are making the very practice of farming increasingly difficult; and the future, with its inherent uncertainty’ (p. 77). Furthermore, a report by ADAS (2004) claims that intergenerational conflict can arise due to the intensely private and sensitive nature of the process.

2.3 Planning for Succession

Creating a succession plan seeks to manage such issues, setting up a smooth transition between the current incumbent and the successor, thus helping to ensure the continuity and prosperity of the business in addition to maintaining harmony within the family (Lansberg, 1988; Dyer, 2003; Perricone et al., 2001; Poutziouris et al., 2006; Palliam et al., 2011). Since Christensen's (1953) study of planning for succession, this issue has gained significant prominence (Handler, 1994; Brockhaus, 2004) and is now an essential and fundamental subject matter of research in family business literature (Handler, 1990; De Massis et al., 2008; Padro-del-Val, 2008; Boyd et al., 2014; Long and Chrisman, 2014). According to Palliam et al. (2011) succession planning is a multi-staged process which includes: ‘selecting the successor, training the successor, communicating the decision, developing the business plan for the enterprise after succession, and defining the long-term future role of the departing incumbent’ (p. 26). It is widely reported that a well thought out and effectively executed succession plan is essential for the continuity and prosperity of a family business through to the next generation, regardless of its size and structure (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001; Dyer,

2003; Poutziouris et al., 2006; Palliam et al., 2011; Saan et al., 2013). In fact, Murphy (2005) contends that dealing effectively with succession planning is the single most lasting gift that one generation can bestow on the next. Palliam et al. (2011) claim that the process can bring ‘mutual benefits’ to both the older and younger generation through a carefully developed and structured succession plan, which ‘reinforces the opportunities for both parties to achieve their goals with respect to career advancement and retirement’ (p. 27). Planning effectively for succession is an integral part of managing a family farm business (Mishra and El-Osta, 2008; Pitts et al., 2009; Gill, 2013; Fasina and Inegbedion, 2014), with Nuttall and Old (2017) suggesting that the process will ‘ensure the farm is efficiently managed using new management with the assets not only being retained but also organised so that the extended family is content with what transpires’ (p. 40).

If succession planning is avoided however, it is irrefutable that the unexpected departure of the business incumbent (in an event such as serious illness or death) can cause a large-scale upheaval in the existing pattern of ownership and authority, subsequently precipitating conflict among heirs. Given the intense pressures that arise under such critical incidences, there may not be sufficient time for the family involved to make the critical and strategic decisions required to ensure the future of the business without a succession plan already in place, leading to a distressed sale of the business in some cases to settle family disputes (Christensen, 1953; Lansberg, 1988; Kenyon-Rouvinez and Ward, 2005; Palliam et al., 2011). According to Lansberg (1988) the liquidation of a firm constitutes a loss not only to the family, but also to the ‘surrounding community, whose economic well-being depends on the survival of the business’ (p. 119). Unsatisfactory succession planning can also lead to a range of destructive outcomes from a family farming perspective, including, at the extreme, ‘the farm being removed from the particular family’s ownership and/or acrimonious family relationships’ (Nuttall and Old, 2017, p. 40). Lange et al. (2011) previously argued that ‘differences in opinions between multiple generations regarding the ownership and management practices of the farm can create disruptive stress among family members. If these disruptions are exacerbated, there can be a tremendous negative impact on both the relationships between family members as well as the economic viability of the farm business’ (p. 3). Furthermore, Goeller (2012) warns that ‘without thoughtful planning for

succession, the unintended consequence is that there are fewer and fewer young farmers entering the business and ownership of land becomes concentrated into fewer and older hands' (p. 150), which can also have adverse effects on the sustainability and indeed survival of rural communities (ibid).

2.4 Ambivalence Towards Succession

A puzzling dilemma however, is that despite all the crucial and logical reasons for planning the incumbent's succession, the process is more often than not left to chance in many family businesses (Lansberg, 1988; Handler, 1994; Sharma et al., 2000; Ward, 2004; Palliam et al., 2011). The lack of and/or poor succession planning and management has been identified as a fundamental reason why many family businesses struggle to outlive the tenure of their founders and survive (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2003; Ward, 2004; Boyd et al., 2014).

Similarly, from a family farming perspective, despite the obvious need and benefits of succession planning, the process is unpopular with the farming community and thus rarely occurs while the older generation is still alive (Kimhi and Lopez, 1999) resulting in the experience for many successors in waiting being 'one of frustration, conflict and unfulfilled dreams' (Glover, 2011, p. 4). Moreover, Keating (1996) previously noted that 'while some farmers plan to retire in their late sixties, many do not expect to retire at all' (p. 414). As research has found a positive correlation between young farmers and farm efficiency and innovation, such impediments can have adverse impacts on both the development trajectory of a family farm and also the productivity of the agricultural industry in general (Gillmor, 1999; Errington and Loblely, 2002; Loblely, 2010). As such, optimal timing is considered crucial to a smooth and successful intergenerational farm transfer process (Hennessey and Rehman, 2007; Lange, et al., 2011). In the Republic of Ireland however, entry into the agricultural industry is particularly inflexible, due to the fact that entry to the sector is predominately by inheritance or purchasing highly inflated farmland (Gillmor, 1999; NESCC, 1997; Hennessey and Rehman, 2007); entry via leasing of land or partnership arrangements, common in many countries throughout the world, are not widely practiced (ibid). Furthermore, less than 1% of the total land area in

Ireland is sold on the open market annually (Hennessy, 2006; Irish Farmers Journal, 2012; Cush and Macken-Walsh, 2016). A recent report on ‘Land Mobility and Succession in Ireland’ claims the lack of land mobility (i.e. transfer of land from one farmer to another, or from one generation to the next) currently experienced in the Republic of Ireland is stifling agricultural growth by preventing young ‘enthusiastic’ farmers gaining access to productive assets (Bogue, 2013). The prevalence of traditional patterns of inheritance often results in a lack of correspondence between the senior generation’s readiness to step aside and the younger generation's inclination to take over (Keating and Munro, 1989; Gill, 2013), which in turn is seen as one of the reasons why the farming community consists of a farm population with a high age profile (Mishra and El-Osta, 2007; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; European Commission, 2013; European Commission, 2015).

In response to this rigidity in the agrarian system, policy makers and practitioners in the Republic of Ireland have explored various mechanisms of financially stimulating and enticing intergenerational farm transfer over the past four decades. These included several well-documented financial incentives which encouraged early retirement from farming, albeit very little change in attitudes amongst the older generation towards the process has come about to date (Commins, 1973; Commins and Kelleher 1973; Ryan, 1995; Gillmor, 1999; Bika, 2007; Leonard et al., 2017). Early retirement schemes, designed to assist older farmers generating low returns to exit the industry have had only marginal success in restructuring the farming sector. Leonard et al. (2017) explain that these early retirement schemes were largely unsuccessful in the sense that ‘they only succeeded in incentivising farmers who were already close to retirement, rather than a fundamental restructuring of the age profile of Irish farmers’ (p. 148). Ryan (1995) previously suggested weak participation was the result of several factors including low retirement benefits and a cultural resistance to leave farming.

At present, there is a concerted effort to ensure the most tax efficient means of transferring Irish farms, in the form of Capital Gains Tax (CGT), Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) and Stamp Duty (Meehan, 2012; Teagasc, 2015). Leonard et al. (2017) explicitly explain that CGT applies only to the farmer transferring land out of their name and it is charged at 33% of the value the property gained between

date of acquisition and date of sale/transfer. CAT is applicable to the successor and is charged at 33% of the value of the property acquired. Stamp Duty is also applicable to the successor, with this being charged at 2% of the value of the property, but can be reduced to 1% provided the transfer is between blood related parties. Furthermore, if the successor is a son/daughter of the farmer, and is under the age of 35 with a minimum Advanced Level 6 Certificate in Agriculture (Green Cert), as a 'Young Trained Farmer', stamp duty is reduced to zero. The level of influence and impact of such measures has yet to be determined however (ibid). In fact, despite these financial incentives, Bogue (2013) argues that the reluctance of older farmers to exit or retire from the farming sector to facilitate young farmers who have a desire to start up persists.

2.5 The Incumbent's Resistance to Succession and Retirement

In general, the indications are that the degree to which a family business engages in the succession process is positively influenced by the propensity of the incumbent to step aside and the presence of a capable successor to take over the firm (Danco, 1982; Palliam et al., 2011). While the successor is undoubtedly a crucial player in the process, Sharma et al. (2001, citing Hofer and Charan, 1984) note that the likelihood of a successful professional management transition is practically zero if the incumbent is not committed to the process. Similarly, in relation to retirement, the mirror image of succession (Errington and Loblely 2002), Sharma et al. (2001) highlight that the extent of effective intergenerational transfer planning in family businesses is directly related to the incumbent's plan to retire from the firm. Indeed, as far back as the 1950s, Christensen (1953) argued that 'the first and foremost barrier that stands in the way of some provision for retirement planning, is the top manager himself' (p. 129). Therefore, as the ultimate power and authority of the family business resides with the older generation, 'the one who has the gold, rules' (Gersick et al., 1997, p. 195). Consequently, their role is of utmost importance during the succession process as they are the persons considered most responsible for the continuity of the family business (Christensen, 1953; Lansberg, 1988; Kelly et al. 2000; Palliam et al., 2011). According to Kenyon-Rouvinez and Ward (2005) the senior generation must effectively manage the succession process, because

‘decisions about the future ownership set the company on a path where the implications will be felt for generations’ (p. 59).

Family business research highlights however that the incumbent’s difficulty and indeed inability to ‘let go’ of their control and power to dictate the daily running of the firm is one of the most significant obstacles in the succession process (e.g. Kets de Vries, 1985; Lansberg, 1988, Handler, 1990; Handler, 1994; Sharma et al., 2001; Kets de Vries, 2003; Le Breton-Miller et al., 2004; Pardo-del-Val, 2008). Furthermore, planning for succession is often perceived as a ‘sign of weakness or as a deficiency of character’ rather than as an ‘essential component of responsible leadership’ (Lansberg, 1988, p. 131), thus discouraging the incumbent to consider it. Due to the centrality and pervasive influence of the incumbent (Lansberg, 1988; Bernhard, 2005; Palliam et al., 2011), such ambivalence toward succession planning and hesitancy to change is a major concern and suggests the need for a deeper understanding of the age old critical forces that prevent and interfere with the process, such as the manner in which the older generation cement their dominant position as head of the family business.

This investigation is particularly necessary from a family farming perspective because few other businesses generate the almost inseparable emotional connections that farming does (Yarwood and Evans 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2013; Rogers et al., 2013; Conway et al., 2016). Farming life, globally, is widely considered a way of life, not just a job, with associated cultural and emotional values, family traditions, norms, ideologies and behaviours (Gray and Lawrence, 2001; Barclay et al., 2007; Barclay et al., 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Uchiyama and Whitehead, 2012; Kuehne, 2016). Vanclay (2004) adds that farmers experience ‘a way of life, a way of making a living that acquires a meaning far deeper than almost any other occupational identity’ (p. 213). According to Gill (2013) ‘this results in a web of economic and emotional tie obligations which pull farming families in different directions’ (p. 79). Price and Conn (2012) add that ‘allowing for succession is an emotional rather than rational process (p. 101). Decisions whether to transfer or not are therefore often based more on ‘heart than head’ (Taylor et al., 1998, p. 568).

2.6 Altering the Status Quo

Family firm literature highlights that the association of succession planning with change is perhaps the greatest threat to the survival of the family business (Ward, 1988; Steier and Miller, 2010; Palliam et al., 2011; Gbadegeshin, 2013). According to Kenyon-Rouvinez and Ward (2005) ‘Succession means change. Change means insecurity, and produces heightened anxiety’ (p. 61). At a cognitive-emotional level, while the older generation is often aware of the good reasons and need for devising a succession plan, they can also experience overwhelming personal psychodynamic and sociodynamic deterrents against managing their exodus from the family business and thus fail to act expeditiously and alter the status quo of the existing management and ownership hierarchy (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001; Berrone et al., 2012).

In a family business, leadership, centrality and power are identified as central needs for the incumbent (Lansberg, 1988; Kets de Vries, 2003). Kets de Vries (1985) suggest that in many cases, an incumbent may resist intergenerational management transitions because he or she has difficulty envisaging life without an important management position in the family business. For an incumbent, surrendering leadership of the firm and disassociating oneself from the business is often ‘experienced as the first step toward losing control over life itself’ (Lansberg, 1988, p. 124). The fear of losing governance and authority of the firm by passing on the reins to the next generation is also compounded by the perception that ‘retiring from the firm will lead to a demotion from one’s central role within the family’ (ibid). An incumbent may also resist the process as they fear ‘losing status in the family and the community as both may be closely intertwined with his or her role in the family business’ (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 22). In addition, an incumbent may also be reluctant to step aside and relinquish control and ownership of their business because this would be surrendering their identity (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001). As the incumbent has spent a substantial proportion of their lives, not just their career, developing and operating their business, it is often their most significant creation and it has grown to become an integral part of their inner self, giving them meaning and a sense of purpose in life (Lansberg, 1988; Palliam et al., 2011). The more central an incumbent’s work role is connected to their overall

sense of self and purpose, the more adverse their retirement expectations are (Gee and Baillie, 1999; Handler and Kram, 1988; Gagne et al., 2011).

Family business literature notes that an incumbent struggling with the concept of intergenerational succession may also experience overwhelming feelings of jealousy and rivalry toward potential successors as they confront the reality of their own ageing and retirement (Lansberg, 1988; Kets de Vries, 2003), whilst still longing for ‘one more chance to prove themselves’ (Sonnenfeld and Spence, 1989, p. 363). Potential change to business values and philosophy and management styles during the succession process further exacerbate these difficulties (Beckhard and Dyer, 1983; Simms 1988; Ibrahim et al., 2001; Sharma et al., 2001; Kets de Vries, 2003; McLeod, 2012). According to Ward (1988), ‘change seems to create nearly unresolvable dilemmas, because change requires compromises’ (p. 194). Research suggests that splitting can occur across generational lines when the incumbent becomes the primary defender of the status quo of the firm and the younger generation wishes to make changes to align the business more closely to their aspirations and competencies during the succession planning process (Ward, 1988; Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001). Intergenerational debates about whether to install new equipment for the family business for example ‘may be less about the value of technology than it is about the relative value of change and consistency. The young often argue for change; the old, for the status quo’ (Ward, 1988, p. 195). In many cases the incumbent owes their ‘personal wealth and lifestyle to a strategy that he or she has built or designed’ throughout their lifetime and therefore discussions about changing their lifelong successful formula can cause considerable distress (ibid).

Similarly, from a family farming perspective, tension may also occur during succession and retirement planning due to opposing goals, expectations and motivations between the two parties regarding the future development of the farm (Keating and Munro, 1989; Potter and Lobley, 1996; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). What is natural and reasonable for one generation might be unthinkable and scandalous to the other. Initiating the process of letting go, also forces the incumbent to face their own mortality (Lansberg, 1988; Bjuggren and Lund, 2001;

Pitts et al., 2009; Nuttall and Old, 2017). Combined, these factors negatively influence the incumbent's motivation and ability to exit the business.

2.7 The Intergenerational Farm Transfer Conundrum

Closely aligned with family firm literature, the keenness to 'let go' is also not common amongst the principles of family farms (Riley, 2011; Whitehead et al., 2012), with Burton (2004) and Burton et al. (2008) referring to a number of studies showing that farmers resist change that requires giving up their socio-cultural status acquired through productivist agricultural roles. Retirement in particular is recognised as a major transitional challenge that places significant emotional stress on the older generation, because for many farmers, their identity and well-being are inextricably intertwined with their occupation (Convery et al., 2005; Riley, 2005; Rogers et al., 2013). Indeed, farming is considered not only a profession, but a 'way of life' (Barclay et al. 2012; Price and Conn, 2012). Furthermore, as the 'audience' (or significant others) for farmers is other farmers (Burton, 2004), the lack of active engagement in farming that retirement would inevitably bring, has the potential to irrevocably change a farmer's 'position within previously familiar social groupings' (Riley, 2011, p. 25). Subsequently, Pitts et al. (2009) explain that the 'senior generation might be reluctant to engage in succession planning, as surrendering control of the farm relegates them to a more peripheral role' (p. 61).

Kirkpatrick (2013) argues that 'too many farmers allow their inability or unwillingness to recognize, analyse, and discuss the emotional aspects of retirement and succession to perpetually stall their planning' (p. 3). However, Lobley et al. (2004) and previously Gillmor (1977; 1999) pointed to distinctive characteristics of farmers, in that they tend to have deep rooted emotional attachment to the key business assets they own, such as particular tracts of land or livestock, thereby increasing their reluctance to relinquish ownership and leave farming. Intergenerational family farm transfer therefore extends the already complicated economic business dimension with an often much more complex emotional dimension. The farm is not just a piece of land or a workplace (Burton, 2004), but rather represents 'the physical manifestation of generations of knowledge; knowledge developed and used over time' (Gill, 2013, p. 79) by both the farmer

and by those who have lived and worked there before (Burton, 2004; Brandth and Haugen, 2011; Glover, 2011). Indeed, Mishra et al. (2010) add that ‘land often has symbolic importance that exceeds its economic value in many societies’ (p. 134). Moreover, Riley’s (2011) exploration of the ‘intricate nature of farmers’ relationships with their livestock’ discovered that in addition to the monetary, the dairy herd also represents ‘an embodiment of their farm history, with the efforts and achievements of several generations inscribed upon them’ (p. 21). The same can be said for sheep farmers, who have often perfected the breeding and subsequent productivity of their flocks over their lifetime by continually propagating genetically superior male ram bloodlines (Yarwood and Evans, 2006) with particular breeds of female ewes whose ‘characteristics embody the natural qualities of the ground on which they graze’ (Gray, 1998, p. 351). Consequently, such distinctive breeding skills and husbandry practices define the personhood and lifetime’s work of the farmer (ibid). The farm therefore is considered to represent ‘who the farmer is’ (Glover, 2011, p. 9).

2.8 The Current Farm Transfer Policy Environment

Interest in intergenerational family farm transfer and its impact on the farming economy has grown considerably amid concerns about the sustainability of an ageing farming population (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). In the Republic of Ireland, it is argued that significant changes and modifications to boost the competitiveness and production efficiency of Irish agriculture through land mobility (i.e. transfer of land from one farmer to another, or from one generation to the next) and structural change are required in order to realise ambitious growth targets such as those identified in the Food Wise 2025 strategic document that recently succeeded the Food Harvest 2020 report (DAFF 2010; Laple and Hennessy 2012; Bogue, 2013; NRN 2013; DAFM, 2015a).

Specifically, not unlike elsewhere in the world, there have been calls for deterrents obstructing the passage of farmland from the older to younger generation of farmers to be overcome as the intergenerational transfer of the family farm is viewed as crucial for future prosperity in the farming industry (Connolly, 2009). Joint

Farming Ventures (JFVs), including arrangements such as farm partnerships, contract rearing and share farming (ADAS, 2007; Turner and Hambly, 2005; ADAS, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; DAFM, 2011; Hennessy, 2014) have recently been promoted within Irish policy discourses as strategies that can ‘facilitate working relationships responsive to younger and older farmers’ needs’ (Cush and Macken-Walsh, 2016, p. 3), subsequently helping to alleviate concerns of an ageing farming population and maximize production efficiency. Ingram and Kirwan (2011) argue however that JFVs may yield nothing like the required result without an in-depth understanding of the human side of such unconventional tenures. Indeed, research indicates that the older generation can experience difficulty relinquishing managerial control and ownership of the family farm, even to their own children (Barclay et al., 2012; Price and Conn, 2012; Whitehead et al., 2012). Ingram and Kirwan (2011) explain that while it appears that some older farmers are willing in principle to offer JFVs arrangements, when it comes to the reality of ‘handing over control (or partial control) of a business that they have been in charge of for perhaps 40 or 50 years’ (p. 294) they are often reluctant to do so. Consequently, there is a lack of land mobility (i.e. access to land) leading to an inevitable decrease in the number of farm transfers.

2.9 The Prince Charles Syndrome

The older generation’s reluctance ‘to release their grip on the business’ (Defra, 2002, p. 59) is impacting on the younger generation’s ability to embark on a true and meaningful career path of full time farming, and under such conditions it could take 20 years for them to assume management of the farm (Keating, 1996; Kirkpatrick 2012). Furthermore, Pietola et al. (2003) claim that the longer the exit decision is delayed and the age of the older farmer increases, the lower the probability of farm transfer. Keating (1996) notes that such a long period of family apprenticeship is ‘analogous to that of Prince Charles, heir to the British throne (p. 414). His mother, Queen Elizabeth II, is still in control. It seems likely that by the time the prince becomes king, he may be at the age when others would be considering retirement. By the time Prince Charles succeeds to the throne, his own son will be ready to assume adult roles. Yet Prince William may himself spend most

of his adult life as an apprentice in the family business' (Keating, 1996, p. 414). Ironically, 21 years after Keating (1996) first made this novel comparison, Prince Charles is still in the same situation today. This predicament may also be the case for many 'younger' farmers worldwide, resulting in significant difficulties to integrate and evolve into a more formidable role in family farm business (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011).

The potential successor's slow rate of progress up the so called 'succession ladder' (Errington, 2002) is reported to succumb them to a so called 'farmer's boy' status i.e. a successor who has worked with his or her parents for a long time, but who has been accorded few formal decision-making responsibilities (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Such a phenomenon has previously been referred to as a 'protracted boyhood' stage (Arensberg and Kimball, 1940). This is a major concern as recent research carried out in the United Kingdom by ADAS (2007) indicates that younger farmers are becoming increasingly impatient as they yearn for greater financial independence, recognition and opportunities for leadership on the family farm. Furthermore, the incumbent's entrenchment can lead to potential frustration, tension and poor relations between both generations (Errington, 1998; Burton and Walford, 2005; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011).

Keating (1996) notes that many older farmers do not view their continued involvement in the family farm business as an impediment to their children's personal and career aspirations. According to Marotz-Baden et al. (1995) 'from the view of the parent, retirement from management responsibility and lightening one's physical workload affords adult children the opportunity to be more autonomous while under the guidance of the parents, who still own at least part of the enterprise' (p. 41). Gasson and Errington (1993) argue however that the older generation must be aware of the needs of the next generation and relinquish ownership rights of the farm to ensure continued involvement and interest in the family farm business. If this is not the case, the incumbent runs the risk of not having a successor as the younger generation lose interest and motivation working in their elder's shadow and therefore decide to leave the family business in pursuit of more fulfilling career opportunities elsewhere (McCrostie et al. 1998; Kimhi and Lopez, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 2013; Cush and Macken-Walsh, 2016), resulting in the self-destruction of the business (Simms 1988; De Massis et al., 2008). This phenomenon is known

as ‘corporeuthanasia’ which Danco (1982) defines as ‘the owner's act of wilfully killing off the business he loves by failing to provide in his lifetime for a viable organization with clear continuity (p. 5). Similarly, Kirkpatrick (2013) notes that ‘farm operations that would be considered financially sound, well-managed businesses can slowly collapse and fail because the older generation is unable or unwilling to face the contradicting desires of seeing the next generation succeed yet retain the independence and self-identity farming provides’ (p. 3). A low rate of entry into farming amongst the younger generation may also have profound implications for the agricultural industry, the countryside, land use and rural society as we know it (ADAS, 2004; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Goeller, 2012). Such a detrimental phenomenon requires immediate intervention.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has identified that the responsibility for directing and implementing the intergenerational family business transfer process lies heavily upon the support of the senior generation. The limited uptake of previous and existing financial enticements designed to stimulate and entice older farmers to ‘step aside’ and retire, however, reveals a resistance or at best ambivalence toward the process. Therefore, as farming is more than a profit maximizing enterprise, the issue of an older farmers’ occupation and farm being a central part of their life is a prevalent issue, but nonetheless remains under researched. The theoretical perspectives of each article will be presented and explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

The Theoretical Landscape

Chapter 3

The Theoretical Landscape

The theoretical perspectives of each article will be presented and explained in this chapter. The use of Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual triumvirate of symbolic capital, power, and violence (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), as well as Graham Rowles's (1983a) concept of 'insiderness' to comprehend the various human dynamics that have an influencing and hindering effect on the intergenerational family farm transfer decision-making process from the perspective of the older generation are the core structures.

3.1 Article 1: Pierre Bourdieu's Concept of Symbolic Capital

Article 1 considers the role that Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital plays on the emotional capacity of older farmers to accept the inevitable challenges and changes brought about by intergenerational transfer of the family farm. Bourdieu, essentially concerned with what people do in their day-to-day lives (Jenkins 1992), introduced the concept of symbolic capital in his analysis of social relationships in pre-capitalist, agrarian societies (Forest and Johnson, 2002). Although this idea has been applied more broadly in sociological research, and across a range of social issues, part of Bourdieu's appeal is that his work is so prolific and empirically documented. Despite this however, there has been little or no research carried out internationally on the link between symbolic capital and intergenerational family farm transfer. Additionally, there has been limited research carried out on this potential correlation from a family firm perspective.

3.1.1 Bourdieu's Primary 'Thinking Tools'

Before discussing the core theoretical framework in article 1, it is necessary in the first instance to introduce Bourdieu's primary 'thinking tools' premising the sociology of everyday life, a complex theoretical triad consisting of 'habitus',

‘capital’ and ‘field’ (Bourdieu, 1977). These three cornerstones of Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008) interrelate with each other, both conceptually and empirically (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), as exemplified by the following formula for studying social practice: ‘(Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101). This equation can be qualified as: ‘practice results from relations between one’s dispositions (habitus) and one’s position of power (capital) within the current state of play of that social arena (field)’ (Maton, 2008, p. 51). As an agent is positioned within a field by virtue of their total accumulation of symbolic capital, which can be gained from any combination of capital available to them in society (Nicholls, 2005), and the practices one engages in to accumulate (this type of/such) capital is structured by their habitus (Zarei and Pirnajmuddin, 2014), this pseudo-mathematical equation helps us to see how symbolic capital cannot be detached from Bourdieu’s interlocking conceptual arsenal and must be understood as a relational concept. Webb et al. (2002) argue that Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, field, and capital ‘constitute what is arguably one of the most successful attempts to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies) and everyday practices (what people do, and why they do it)’ (p. 1).

3.1.2 Bourdieu’s Forms of Capital

In economic thought, the term capital originally meant ‘an accumulated sum of money, which could be invested in the hope of future profits’ (Field, 2003, p. 12). According to Fuchs (2003) ‘what distinguishes Bourdieu from orthodox forms of Marxism is that he does not reduce all aspects of social life to the economy’ (p. 391). Bourdieu (1986) asserts that it is in fact ‘impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory’ (p. 242). On the structural level of society Bourdieu (1984) therefore distinguishes four different types of distinct, yet inextricably linked forms of capital, each of which can be utilised by an agent in a social field: economic capital in the sense of Marx (money, profits), cultural capital (namely knowledge and skills), social capital (acquaintances, networks and social connections) and symbolic capital.

3.1.3 Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is constituted when the different forms of capital (economic, social and cultural) are socially perceived and recognized as legitimate bases for claiming esteem, honour, prestige, respect and recognition within a given field (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu (1977) explains that symbolic capital concerns ‘the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name’ (p. 179). A key property of symbolic capital is that it is not strictly intrinsic in an individual, but in fact developed as a result of social interaction (Christian and Bloome, 2004). Webb et al., (2002) explain that ‘prestige and a glowing reputation, for example, operate as symbolic capital because they mean nothing in themselves, but depend on people believing that someone possesses these qualities’ (p. xv). Üstüner and Thompson (2012) go on to state that ‘symbolic capital is a sociological phenomenon rather than a strictly psychological one. That is, the field-specific conditions that legitimate particular forms of capital transcend the idiosyncratic judgements of a given individual’ (p. 797). Christian and Bloome (2004) add that symbolic capital is ‘a social process, closely aligned with social identity and social status’ (p. 368). This derivative form of capital also gives symbolic power (form of authority) over other agents within a field. According to Swartz (1997) symbolic capital is ‘a form of power that is not perceived as power but as legitimate demands for recognition, deference, obedience, or the services of others’ (p. 90). Swartz (2013) later highlights that ‘symbolic capital is a reformulation of Weber’s idea of charismatic authority that legitimates asymmetrical power relations by accentuating selected personal qualities of elites as supposedly superior and natural’ (p. 103).

3.1.4 Theorising Symbolic Capital at Farm Level

Although the concept of symbolic capital has not been explicitly used in the discussions of family farm transfer to date, several analogous strands of research demonstrate the value of symbolic capital in the field. As the ‘audience’ (or significant others) for farmers is neighbouring farmers (Burton, 2004), one of the most potent elements of symbolic capital in the farming literature is its close correlation with the ‘good farmer’ identity concept. To be perceived and recognised

as a ‘good farmer’ within the farming community, skilfully performed farming activities and behaviours such as ‘the physical appearance or attractiveness of the crop (or animal) and crop yield per acre/hectare (or weight/quality per animal)’ (Burton, 2004, p. 201), generate symbolic capital, which in turn contributes to the social status of the farmer (Yarwood and Evans, 2006). Symbolic capital also comes to the fore in times of crises; driving the need to continue business operations through critical incidences, a classic example being the 2001 Foot and Mouth crises (Glover, 2011). Glover (ibid) found that a key element to business survival during these difficult periods resulted in an inherent need to maintain symbolic capital, which in turn embeds a farmers’ place in society with their unique identity remaining in place. Research has also recognised the influential role symbolic capital plays on farmers’ resistance against and rejection of Agri-Environmental Scheme (AES) involvement in the United Kingdom (Burton et al., 2008). The lack of possibilities within Agri-Environmental work to display skills and performance as a ‘good farmer’, compared to conventional farming, where ‘tidy and efficient’ farming practices (such as evenly coloured fields and straight furrow lines) generate such symbolic capital, has seen a lack of support for this scheme amongst members of the farming community (ibid). In using symbolic capital as a lens through which we can explore the challenges of intergenerational family farm transfer, article 1 details the way in which this concept influences the older generation’s unwillingness to ‘step aside’ and retire from farming (Foskey, 2005; Loblely et al., 2010; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011) that continues to be mainstay in many rural areas globally.

3.2 Article 2: Pierre Bourdieu’s Concept of Symbolic Power and Symbolic Violence

The primary aim of article 2 is to consider whether the senior generation of the farming community use their symbolic capital associated with elder status and gerontocratic power to exert Bourdieu’s emotive notion of symbolic violence on the younger generation, in an effort to sustain and galvanize his or her existing dominant position into old age. Weber (2009) explains that symbolic violence is exercised when ‘holders of superior symbolic capital use the power conferred by

that capital against those with markedly less social currency' (p. 97). Bourdieu's work has been underutilized in family farm research (Burton et al., 2008; Glover 2011) and this paper offers a new perspective on the issue of intergenerational farm transfer.

3.2.1 Symbolic Power and Symbolic Violence

Swartz (2013) highlights that 'the capacity to impose symbolic meanings (symbolic power), the authority to do so (symbolic capital), and the distorting effects upon individual autonomy and interests (symbolic violence) are different but intimately connected aspects in Bourdieu's thinking about the symbolic realm' (p. 84). Symbolic violence in contrast to overt violence, is 'a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling' (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 1-2). Despite Bourdieu's reference to 'gentle violence', 'symbolic violence is as real and as dangerous as other forms, if not more so, as it uses insidious channels that are harder to detect' (Moukarbel, 2009, p. 160). Webb et al. (2002) notes that symbolic violence may 'take the form of people being denied resources, treated as inferior or being limited in terms of realistic aspirations' (p. xvi).

Crucially, in order for symbolic violence to be effective, it needs to be performed on people who are predisposed by their habitus to feel or adhere to it (Moukarbel, 2009). Bourdieu explains that human cognition is influenced by the specific domains of social life in which one is embedded (Sieweke, 2012). These socially constructed environments such as industry, politics, and academia are conceptualized under the notion of fields (Yarwood and Evans, 2006). Through regular practice in a field, Bourdieu explains that individuals develop habitus, 'the set of dispositions or learned behaviours which provides individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives' (Blackledge, 2001, p. 349). Shucksmith (1993) previously argued that farmers' decision-making cannot be understood without reference to the concept of habitus. As these sets of deep-seated cultural dispositions are 'acquired through a gradual process of inculcation in which early childhood experiences are particularly important' (Bourdieu 1991, p. 12),

article 2 hypothesises that the younger generation are inclined to be internally conditioned ‘to accept the conditions of their domination as legitimate’ (Swartz, 2013, p. 84) simply because it is considered ‘the way of the world’ (Webb et al. 2002, p. 25) within the farm household. Riley (2011) previously explained that ‘past practices provide a moral framework, or ‘blueprint’, for farmers’ own current activities and actions’ (p. 21). The fact that habitus functions as an ‘internal compass’, orientating and guiding one’s social behaviour and practices of everyday life (Panagiotopoulos, 1990; Maclean, et al., 2010), helps us understand why those on the receiving end of symbolic violence, in this case the successor in waiting, often perceive their subordination as ‘natural’ and engage in social practices that act against their own self-interests (Ougaard and Leander, 2010). Swartz (2013) suggests that symbolic violence is in fact ‘misrecognised obedience,’ where symbolic power is accepted as legitimate rather than arbitrary (p. 83). This acceptance of the existing hierarchical status quo, even by those deprived by it, is what Bourdieu refers to as ‘the paradox of doxa’, whereby people internalise the discourses of the dominant, meaning that ‘the most intolerable conditions of existence can so often be perceived as acceptable and even natural’ (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 1). Bourdieu’s conceptual triumvirate of symbolic capital, power, and the exercise of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), has previously been examined in Traphagan’s (2000) study of religious ritual among rural Japanese elders. Traphagan (2000) found that the attainment of elder status and personal accomplishments throughout one’s lifetime brings with it a social position inherently endowed with symbolic capital. Not only does the ascriptive status place an individual at the core of family power structures but it also brings with it the ability and expectation that one will be involved in directing younger members of the community (ibid). Article 2 is concerned with the manner in which symbolic power is being exercised against the younger generation of the farming community and reflects on whether it can be characterized as symbolic violence.

3.3 Article 3: Graham Rowles’s Concept of ‘Insideness’

Article 3 is driven by a theoretical gap in the understanding of farmer-farm relationship in later life. Arguably, the seminal work in the area of place attachment

and identity amongst rural elderly persons in old age is Graham Rowles's (1983a) concept of 'insideness' (after Relph, 1976). In considering the geographies of later life, Rowles (1990) explains that insideness involves 'an intimate involvement with a place that is grounded in personal history and qualitatively differentiates this place from space outside' (p. 107). Riley (2012) previously employed the concept of insideness to explore the challenges and issues surrounding the occupational cessation and retirement relocation of retired farming couples in the United Kingdom, however there have been no studies carried out to date which have explicitly explored Rowles's three interrelated constructs of place attachment amongst older, active and productive members of the farming community.

3.3.1 Insideness

Rowles' (1983a; 1983b; 1983c) ethnographic research on elderly people living in a rural Appalachian community conceptualized three key dimensions of place attachment: physical, social and autobiographical insideness.

'Physical insideness' is characterized by 'familiarity and habitual routines of habitation within the home setting' (Oswald and Wahl, 2005, p. 29), resulting in the sense that an individual is able to 'wear the setting like a glove' (Rowles, 1983b, p. 114). Furthermore, Rowles (1984) explains that one can become almost 'physiologically melded into the environment' (p. 146). This 'body awareness' of space (Rowles and Ravdal, 2002; Rowles, 1993), results from an intimacy with one's 'physical configuration stemming from the rhythm and routine of using the space over many years' (Rowles, 1984, p. 146). Physical insideness is also considered to significantly contribute to general satisfaction and well-being in old age (Rowles, 2006). From a family farming perspective, Riley (2012) highlights that the farm provides an arena in which farmers are able to 'develop a comfortable sense of physical insideness' (p. 774). In fact, Riley (2012) adds that the farm space and associated routines 'may serve as a resistance of old age' for farmers (p. 774).

Rowles (1983a) suggests that the intimacy of physical insideness is supplemented by a sense of 'social insideness', or immersion. Social insideness is fostered and developed through 'everyday social interaction and the performance of particular

social roles in a neighbourhood' (Riley, 2012, p. 763). This allows for the older generation to integrate and become a part of the 'social fabric of the community' (Rowles, 1983a, p. 302). Burns et al. (2012) add that 'social insideness evolves not only from everyday social exchanges and relationships but also from a sense of being well known and knowing others' (p. 3). Furthermore, social insideness is considered to be particularly significant in old age, as one may need to draw on these long-term relationships in accommodating declining physical capabilities and health in later life (Rowles, 2008; Riley, 2012). Social insideness within the farming community is largely framed upon 'ongoing engagement with the everyday practices of farming' (Riley, 2012, p. 769). The 'dense intertwining of occupational and social spaces' within the farming community results in the older generation experiencing a greater distancing and/or hiatus from previously familiar social networks upon retirement however' (ibid).

Finally, the third sense of insideness in later life is 'autobiographical insideness'. Autobiographical insideness extends beyond the physical setting or social milieu to create an environment that has 'a temporal depth of meaning' (Rowles, 1983a, p. 303). Peace et al. (2005) add that autobiographical insideness is 'based on time and space, a historical legacy of life lived within a particular environment' (p. 194). Autobiographical insideness has been suggested to be the most relevant to describe older people's attachment to place because it is embedded in memories of significant experiences, relationships and events over one's lifetime (Rowles, 1993; Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Burns et al., 2012). According to Rowles (1983b) this provides 'a sense of identity and an ever-present source of reinforcement for a biography interpreted from the retrospective vista of a life review' (p. 114). Older people with strong ties to place may feel more mastery as well as a greater sense of security and belonging (Burns et al., 2012; Lecovich, 2014). The family home in particular is seen as a 'central site of autobiographical insideness' in later life - often seen as a 'storehouse of memories', which offers 'a sense of familiarity, connection and self-identity' (Riley, 2012, p. 764). Using these three interrelated constructs of place attachment in old age, article 3 generates a comprehensive insight into the subjective experience of farmers growing old on the farm.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Staying true to its geographical foundations, this article-based thesis employs a multi-method triangulation design in an attempt to obtain an in-depth, holistic understanding of the human factors that influence the process of transferring the family farm business from the perspective of the senior generation. Cohen and Manion (1986) define triangulation as an ‘attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint’ (p. 254). Burns and Grove (2001) add that triangulation is the collection of data from multiple sources maintaining the same foci, that each contribute uniquely to the ascertainment, description, or understanding of a subject area. For the purpose of this study triangulation was assured using a collection of both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of self-administered questionnaires and an Irish adaptation of the International FARMTRANSFERS Survey in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews. Approaching the research phenomenon from three different, yet co-equal and interdependent methodological vantage points, counteracts the limitations and biases that stem from using a single method, thus increasing the reliability, validity and rigor of findings (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Burns and Grove, 2001). Denizon and Lincoln (2003) add that a triangulation approach recognizes diversity amongst perspectives and experiences; it adds breath, complexity, richness and depth. Furthermore, a multi-staged methodological approach allows for an interview-interviewee familiarity and trust to develop, which Riley (2011) claims ‘offers the advantage of allowing respondents to discuss a wider range of topics as they became more comfortable with the interview dynamic’ (p. 19).

4.2 Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process

Before detailing the multi-method data collection techniques employed in this study, it is first necessary to discuss how my positionality affected the research process. Woods (2010) explains that ‘the qualitative turn in rural geography has been accompanied by a heightened sensitivity to the practice of the research process and to the positionality of the researcher’ (p. 841). Positionality is a term which is used to describe how elements framing a researcher's identity such as age, cultural background and dichotomies such as insider/outsider and, in the case of this study, farmer/PhD student and farmer’s son, affect fieldwork (ibid).

4.2.1 Establishing Connections

Undertaking a study on the human dynamics of intergenerational family farm transfer requires a strong ability to think critically and to conceptualise and research the ever-changing rural environment and agricultural industry from a geographical perspective. I readily chose the National University of Ireland, Galway to carry out research on this topic as it holds a distinguished tradition of rural research. The Rural Research Cluster within the Discipline of Geography at the National University of Ireland, Galway where I have been based throughout the duration of my PhD, includes my research co-supervisors, Dr John McDonagh and Dr Maura Farrell, as well as other academics with interests in developing and extending the theoretical, conceptual and empirical boundaries of rural studies. As a university that is itself situated in a rural location on the periphery of Europe, the existence of several key multidisciplinary research institutions and centres at the National University of Ireland, Galway that relate in significant ways to my research project have also been of importance as they provided me with a means to disseminate my research findings to policy-makers, journalists and the general public in the form of ‘Policy Briefs’ (see Appendix O), and poster presentations (see Appendix P).

The Rural Studies Research Cluster within the Discipline of Geography at the National University of Ireland, Galway are also part of a newly appointed consortium running Ireland's National Rural Network (NRN), a component of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP). My research co-supervisor, Dr

Maura Farrell, is Project Leader of the National University of Ireland, Galway's involvement in the consortium and this association has provided me with numerous opportunities to disseminate my research findings in the public domain (see Appendix Q). Dr Farrell has also recently selected me to be a delegate on NRN Sub-Advisory Committee for Farm Viability and Competitiveness. This role has provided me with direct access to discuss issues relating to my topic of research with key stakeholders within the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and other organisations delivering Rural Development in Ireland. This exposure has also brought significant attention and interest to my peer-reviewed publications.

4.2.1.1 Collaborating with Teagasc

My supervisory team and the Rural Research Cluster at the National University of Ireland, Galway, also collaborate with Teagasc, (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland). This association with Teagasc, particularly with its own strong leadership in rural research, fitted my research needs perfectly, as it unites expertise in rural theory, research and practice, ultimately benefiting my research project. In particular, I had the privileged position of having Anne Kinsella, Senior Research Officer with the Agricultural Economics and Farms Surveys Department Farm at Teagasc, on my PhD Graduate Review Committee. The close working relationships I built with such key individuals at Teagasc proved to be invaluable to my research process as it placed me in a position to carry out questionnaires with their farming clients at a series of clinics on the topic of family farm transfer as outlined in section 4.3. These events also provided me with an ideal opportunity to recruit participants located throughout the Republic of Ireland for interview at the second phase of data collection (see Section 4.6). In addition, pursuing my PhD in close proximity to this research environment at Teagasc allowed me to disseminate my research findings to an academic and farming audience in their quarterly research and innovation magazine, TRResearch (see Appendix N). My links with Teagasc also provided me with a fulcrum to become involved in the International FARMTRANSFERS Project as described in section 4.4.

4.2.1.2 Visiting Scholar Position in the U.S.A.

As a result of an agreement which provides for a student exchange between the National University of Ireland, Galway and the University of California in the U.S.A., I also spent three months based in the Agricultural Issues Centre at the University of California, Davis, as a visiting scholar during the academic period September 2015 to December 2015. This Centre provides broadly based, objective information on a range of critical, emerging agricultural issues and their significance for the U.S. economy through studies, conferences and publications. Here, I was given the opportunity to present my research to an international audience whilst also networking with individuals at the University of California Small Farms Programme and California Institute for Rural Studies. As my research topic on the issue of family farm transfer is not just a national or even European challenge, but a global one, this experience was invaluable in obtaining a Californian perspective on the issue.

During my time in the U.S.A., I was also invited by Mr. John R. Baker, Attorney at Law at the Beginning Farmer Centre, Iowa State University and Co-Director of the International FARMTRANSFERS Project that I am leading Ireland's involvement in (see section 4.4), to attend and present at a Succession Facilitation Certification Training programme offered by the International Farm Transition Network (IFTN). This event was held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in September 2015 (see Appendix L). Upon completion of this training programme, I was required to complete a case study scenario examination question in order to obtain a Farm Succession Facilitator certification (see Appendix M). This successful endeavour equipped me with a comprehensive set of facilitation skills to work with farm families during the farm succession process. My newly acquired qualification as an internationally certified Farm Succession Facilitator enabled me to transfer such knowledge into potential practical applications and solutions in policy and consultancy domains as outlined in the recommendations section of the thesis (see Chapter 8).

In all, my research experience as a PhD student at the National University of Ireland, Galway, created a positionality which provided me with access to research participants, ultimately leading to the generation of a rich data set. My positionality

also enabled me establish connections with key academics in my field of research, both nationally and internationally, and develop skillsets that were fundamental in informing the recommendations and conclusions of this study.

4.2.2 Autoethnography: My Story

My upbringing, education, and research theme are all rural. Farmer et al. (2012), explain that being ‘rural’ offers a distinct advantage for conducting rural research, as it enables the researcher to gain easier access to, build credibility with, and empathise more readily with research participants. Under the cloak of academia, my suitability for pursuing a PhD on the topic of intergenerational family farm transfer stems from my track record in undertaking rural research projects over the course of my undergraduate studies and Masters degree at University College Dublin. During this time, I was presented with many invaluable opportunities to develop specialist knowledge and skills in the field of rural theory and policy. These experiences imbued a sense of the importance of bridging the gap between theory and practice and giving a voice to actors whose stories can be marginalised by the larger assemblages of state (such as older farmers in the context of this research).

To fully contextualise my rural positionality however, it is essential to highlight my biographical connection and relationship to the farming community. I was born and raised on my family’s mixed livestock farm in North-East Co. Galway. My parents are farmers, as were my grandparents and great-grandparents before them. This embodied experience and knowledge of the farming ‘way of life’, had a positive effect on the research process as it encouraged uptake and participation in the multi-staged data collection process. In particular, my lifelong familiarity with the farming community facilitated the development of a bond with interview participants due to our mutual understanding of the farming world (Kuehne, 2016). Therefore, while the academic path that I have chosen in life, appears on the surface to be far removed from my childhood experiences of lambing ewes in spring, shearing sheep in summer, harvesting barley in the autumn and feeding silage to cattle in winter, similar to Robinson (2014), my upbringing on a family farm in rural Ireland, has authenticated my positionality to conduct in-depth research with the older generation of farmers. I also feel that my farm-related endeavours today

however are more akin to the late Seamus Heaney's reflection on the difference between his scholarly work and his father's physical spade work on their family farm: 'Between my finger and my thumb the squat pen rests. I'll dig with it' (Heaney, 1980, p. 11) (see Appendix R). This metaphor gradually unfolds throughout his study.

4.2.3 Positionality and the Data Collection Process

My positionality undoubtedly changed throughout the data collection process, as rapport, empathy and trust were built with the research participants. Sultana (2007) previously pointed out that positionality is 'constantly reworked' over time (p. 377).

4.2.3.1 Self-Identification as a 'Student'

From the outset of the multi-staged data collection process, I introduced myself to prospective research participants as a student, rather than that of a researcher, a label which I felt may infer 'scientific' or 'expert' knowledge and demeanour (Tsouvalis et al., 2000). For example, on the cover page of the self-administered questionnaire, I identified myself as a '2nd year PhD student'. In methodological terms, this positionality attempted to equalise and flatten the power differential that initially existed between the research participants and I. Kuehne (2016) previously explained that it can be difficult to develop a rapport and build a trust with farmers, particularly if the interviewer is perceived as being aligned to be associated with governmental departments and institutions.

4.2.3.2 Newly formed Identity as 'a Farmer's Son'

As the formal phase of fieldwork commenced, the way in which my identity was perceived began to evolve upon meeting with research participants and detailing my personal background and upbringing as 'a farmer's son' in rural North-East Co. Galway. I quickly began to lose the 'student' label, as I received acknowledgement of my identification with, and understanding of the farming culture (my insider knowledge) (Kuehne, 2016). My newly formed positionality as a 'farmer's son'

enabled me to initially engage with research participants in an informal manner using the language of an ‘insider’, especially when discussing day-to-day farming practices, agricultural industry trends and weather concerns. Obtaining an ‘insider’ status, where the researcher holds a similar position to those being researched, is considered desirable and beneficial as it produces closer, more direct and truer knowledge (Mather, 1996). Indeed, Kuehne (2016) explain that farmers categorize people as ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ by how similar their culture, language and knowledge are to their own.

4.2.3.3 Shared Understanding of the Farming World

My positionality, as a farmer’s son in the research process, allowed me to speak, embody and understand the ‘language of farming’ (Burton, 2004, p. 212). I subsequently drew upon this skillset to ‘establish rapport and communicate’ (Dowling, 2010, p. 35) with interview respondents. Indeed, the nature of qualitative research engenders the establishment of relationships between the researcher and participant, through building comfort, trust, and ultimately rapport between both parties (Dickson-Swift et al., 2006). The development of a trusting interviewer-interviewee relationship was essential when implementing my research methodology, due to the sensitive and emotional nature of the topic of intergenerational family farm transfer. Indeed, Silverman (2000) notes that interview respondents report a greater freedom to ‘open up’ and discuss sensitive topics, when they perceive that the interviewer can relate to their life experience. Bennett (2006) previously revealed in her ethnographic exploration of power dynamics in a Dorset farmhouse, that her farming background also eased access for fieldwork on farms.

4.2.4 Reflexivity

Cognizant of the criticisms and ethical concerns of ‘going native’ and creating a self-depiction that is too akin to that of the research participants however (Silverman, 2001), I adopted a reflexive approach throughout the research process, whereby I was proactively aware that my positionality may influence the nature of

interactions with the targeted population cohort and outcomes of the research process. Bryman (2008), explains that reflexivity is a ‘term used in research methodology to refer to a reflectiveness among social researchers about the implications for the knowledge of the social world they generate of their methods, values, biases, decisions and mere presence in the very situations they investigate’ (p. 698). Acknowledging that I could not consider myself to be ‘an all-seeing and all-knowing researcher’ (Rose, 1997, p. 305), I was careful to maintain references to the study, by following the Problem-Centred Interview guideline when interviewing farmers for example (see Appendix H).

4.2.5 ‘Insider/Outsider’ Positionality

My complex positionality allowed me to ‘shuttle between insider and outsider roles’- the farmer’s son, the PhD student (Herbert, 2000, p. 552), performing one aspect of my positionality in my favour more strongly than the other, depending on who I was interviewing. By shifting roles and stepping in and out of a dual persona (Woods, 2010), I claimed the ‘space between’ both positionalities (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), reflecting what Mercer (2007) refers to as an insider/outsider dichotomy. Whilst this ‘dual-positionality’ performance combined the best of both approaches; a continued process of critical reflexive thought was essential in ensuring that prior assumptions that I had gained through my own personal experience and from the literature did not influence my thinking about the phenomenon under investigation (Holloway and Wheeler 2010).

4.2.6 Underlying Meanings

Rather than being in a position where the interviewer ‘does not have enough background, enough knowledge, and enough sensitized imagination to catch the subtleties and complexities of what the interviewee is saying’ (Dexter, 2006, p. 28), my positionality as a farmer’s son and my knowledge of the subject matter as a PhD student meant that I was able to listen to the interview respondent’s narratives, with what Dexter (2006) refers to as ‘the third ear’. Therefore, similar to Robinson (2014), I was not just hearing and taking note of the interviewees words, I

sufficiently understood their underlying meanings, as well as the ‘farmer-lingo’ in which they were spoken. Our shared cultural understanding of the farming ‘way of life’ (Kuehne, 2016), subsequently equipped me with the credibility and respect to confront interviewees about any inconsistent and/or contradictory statements in their accounts. Such confrontation is a key aspect of the Problem-Centred Interview approach, as outlined in section 4.6.5.3. In summary, although the ultimate findings of this research stood firm, irrespective of my ‘dual-positionality’ as a PhD student and farmer’s son, the alternative of ignoring this facet of the research process is problematic and inadvisable (Sultana, 2007).

4.3 Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics Questionnaire

The first phase of data collection involved undertaking a detailed survey with farmers in attendance at a series of ‘Transferring the Family Farm’ clinics hosted by Teagasc (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland), to investigate the behavioural intentions and attitudes of older farmers towards succession and retirement from farming (see Appendix B). These clinics facilitated by Teagasc, took place at 11 locations throughout the Republic of Ireland in September and October 2014 (see Table 4.1 and Map 4.1), with Teagasc farm management specialists, local solicitors, accountants, social welfare advisors, citizens information and other experts also in attendance for ‘one to one’ meetings with attendees held in private booths around each venue. These events also provided an ideal opportunity to recruit participants located throughout the Republic of Ireland for interview at the second phase of data collection.

Representatives from each of Teagasc’s advisory service regional units organised and participated in these clinics (delivered free of charge) following a series of seminars in 2012 and a successful pilot event held in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford in February 2014. Each of the 11 clinics were structured into a morning session starting at 10.30am and finishing at 1.00pm and an afternoon session starting at 2.00pm until 4.30pm. The purpose of these clinics was to inform participants about key issues to be taken into account when planning a transfer and to outline the importance of devising a succession plan. As part of Teagasc’s campaign to advertise and promote these ‘Transferring the Family Farm’ clinics, invitations

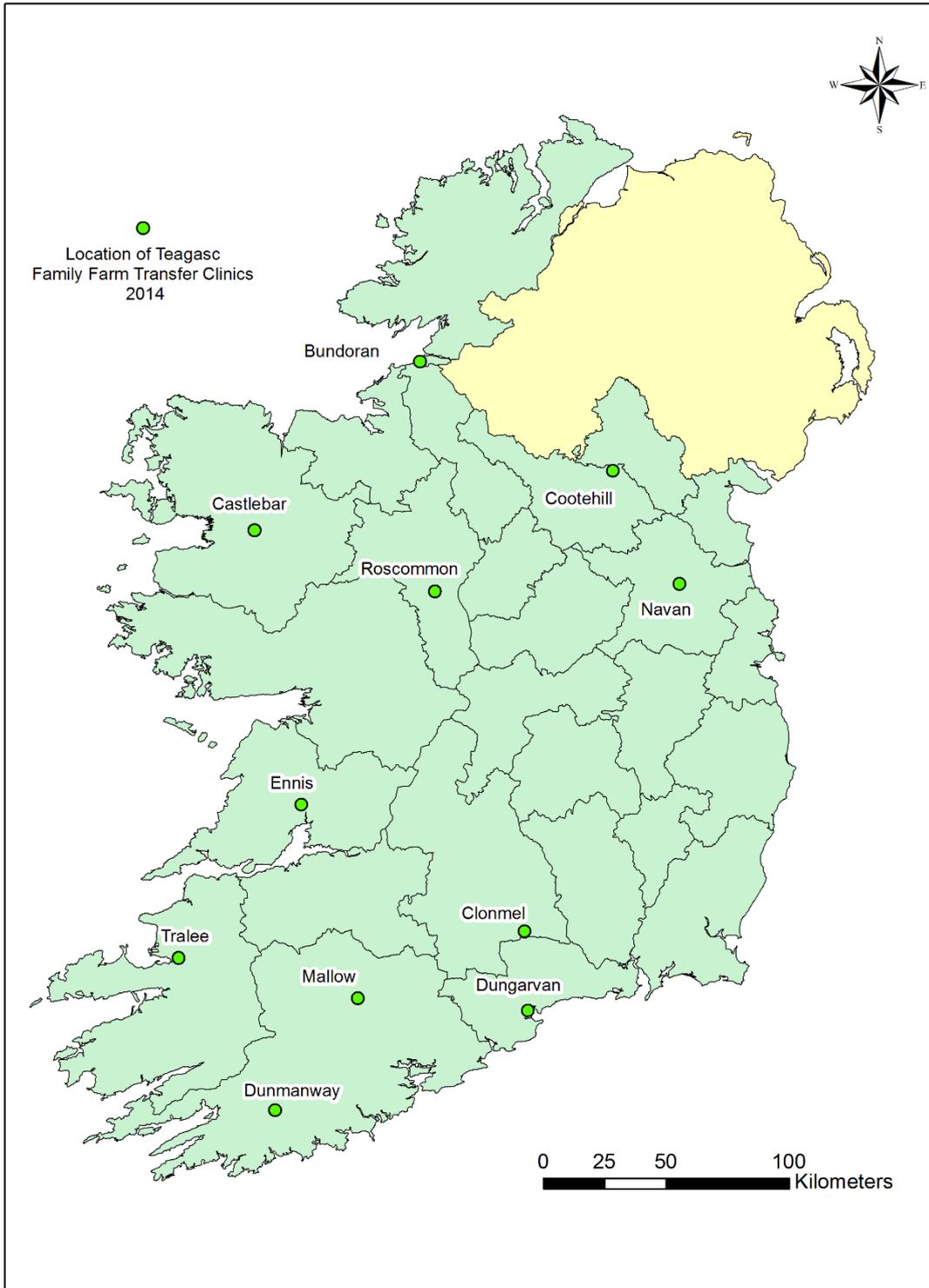
were sent out to each of their 43,000 farming family clients to attend to discuss their concerns about transferring their farms to the next generation (see Appendix C). Information about the clinics was also included in the June 2014 edition of Teagasc's Rural Development Advisory Newsletter (Teagasc, 2014) (see Appendix D).

Prior to the distribution of self-administered questionnaires at these clinics, a draft questionnaire was initially developed, piloted with 10 randomly selected farmers in attendance at Ballinasloe Co-Operative Livestock Mart, Co. Galway in August 2014, and revised where necessary to strengthen reliability (Creswell, 2005). This 'logical, systematic and structured' design approach (Rattray and Jones, 2007, p. 234), resulted in a self-administered questionnaire that communicated the desired message effectively and obtained, as far as was verifiable, reliable responses from farmers in attendance at these clinics.

In addition to probing the succession and retirement intentions of older farmers, survey respondents were also asked to state the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements, measured on five-point Likert scales. Based on a review of family firm and family farm literature, these psychometric scales drew on factors that influence and hinder the succession and retirement process from the perspective of the senior generation. The statements therefore tested a number of hypotheses expressed in this paper by providing an insight into: (i) older farmers' attitudes and opinions regarding the transfer of the family farm to the next generation, (ii) their emotional connection to their farm and occupation and (iii) their perspectives on farm transfer policy. In addition to eliciting the personal views of farmers, the survey collected respondents' relevant socio-demographic information. Survey participants were also given the option of supplying their contact details for interview at the next stage of the research process.

Date	Teagasc Clinic Venue	County
9 September 2014	Errigal Country House Hotel, Cootehill	Cavan
11 September 2014	Ballygarry House Hotel, Tralee	Kerry
12 September 2014	The Ardboyne, Navan	Meath
18 September 2014	West County Hotel, Ennis	Clare
30 September 2014	Park Hotel, Dungarvan	Waterford
1 October 2014	Mallow GAA Grounds	Cork
3 October 2014	Parkway Hotel, Dunmanway	Cork
6 October 2014	Hotel Minella, Clonmel	Tipperary
7 October 2014	Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar	Mayo
8 October 2014	Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran	Donegal
14 October 2014	The Abbey Hotel, Roscommon	Roscommon

Table 4.1: Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics 2014 Locations



Map 4.1: Geographical Location of Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics 2014

4.4 International FARMTRANSFERS Survey

Article 3 employs the same multi-method triangulation design employed in Article 1 and Article 2, in conjunction with a preliminary exploration of data obtained from an Irish adaptation of the International FARMTRANSFERS Survey in an attempt to secure a comprehensive picture of the intricate, multi-level farmer-farm attachment in later life and the suitability of previous farm transfer policy strategies. In order to validate, strengthen reliability and build on the quantitative data gathered at the Transferring the Family Farm' clinics hosted by Teagasc, a list of copyright questions derived from the International FARMTRANSFERS Survey, refined for Irish conditions, were included in the 2014 Teagasc Land Mobility Farm Survey conducted by Amárach Research on behalf of Teagasc (see Appendix E). Lobley and Baker (2012) explain that the FARMTRANSFERS project is an international collaborative effort around a common research instrument that 'yields a range of (largely quantitative) data relating to the pattern, process and speed of succession and retirement which provides a firm base for future inquiries utilising different methodologies' (p. 15).

The survey was undertaken within a memorandum of understanding between the researcher, Anne Kinsella, Senior Research Officer at the Teagasc Agricultural Economics and Farms Surveys Department and the International FARMTRANSFERS project's Co-Directors, Professor Matt Lobley, at the Centre for Rural Policy Research, University of Exeter, United Kingdom and John R. Baker, Attorney at Law at the Beginning Farmer Centre, Iowa State University, U.S.A. To date, the survey, based on an original design developed by the late Professor Andrew Errington of the University of Plymouth in 1991 (Errington and Tranter, 1991), has been replicated in 10 countries and 8 states in the U.S.A. and completed by over 15,600 farmers throughout the world (ibid) (see Appendix F). Given the wide range of social, cultural and economic variations in the different countries and U.S.A. states participating in the International FARMTRANSFERS project, slight modifications (with the agreement of the project directors) were made to the questionnaire to reflect the Irish situation. These FARMTRANSFERS questions were then conducted with a stratified random sample of 496 farmers

included in the 2014 Teagasc Land Mobility Farm Survey, representing over 80,000 farms nationally.

4.5 Questionnaire Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis involves the use of statistical data analysis software or packages to test research hypothesis and/or answer research questions posed in a study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Over 2,800 farmers attended the 11 ‘Transferring the Family Farm’ clinics hosted by Teagasc, and all of the 417 farmers who were randomly selected and then approached to participate in the study agreed to complete the questionnaire, resulting in a 100% response rate. However, as older farmers are the target population of this study, only respondents aged 55 and over have been included in the analysis. The reasoning for specifically focussing on farmers aged 55 and over is that one of the terms and conditions for farmers intending to retire under the 2007 Early Retirement Scheme (ERS 3) was that participants must have been ‘between his/her 55th and 66th birthday’ to be eligible (DAFM, 2007). Questionnaires with missing data were also eliminated from the survey to avoid biased statistical results. After both these processes, a total of 324 complete questionnaires qualified for analysis. 60% (n=194) of these respondents also gave their consent to be interviewed in more depth at a later date. In relation to the FARMTRANSFERS data collected from a stratified random sample of 496 farmers included in the 2014 Teagasc Land Mobility Farm Survey, representing over 80,000 farms nationally, only those in the 51 and over age category were included in the study, resulting in 309 farmers qualifying for analysis. Combining both datasets provides a comprehensive, nationally representative sample of the Irish farming population across a broad spectrum of farming operations, typologies, geographical location and scale.

In terms of quantitative data analysis for this study, questionnaire data were coded and then analysed using frequency distribution tables and a series of cross-tabulations performed in the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 Programme (see Appendix G). Vare et al. (2005) offer an important note of caution in interpreting such aggregate data however; according to Vare et al.

(2005) surveys carried out with farmers on the topic of succession ‘have only a negligible value in predicting the observed behaviour’ and their results may in fact mislead the direction of future policy in the area (p. 9). Riley (2016) adds that the ‘blurred geographical boundary between home and work’ make surveys on the retirement intentions and status of older farmers ‘difficult to define and locate’ in comparison to ‘other occupations where the move into retirement is often a distinct process’ (p. 109). In fact, Lobley et al. (2010) argue that the most common approach to farm retirement may not actually be retirement per se, but rather remaining in situ and ‘continuing day-to-day involvement’ on the farm, albeit with a reduction in some of the ‘more arduous tasks’ in old age (p. 51). The quantitative questionnaire data therefore can only be considered as an initial exploration into the behavioural intentions and attitudes of older farmers towards succession and retirement from farming, that essentially serve as building blocks to structure the qualitative interviews at the next stage of data collection. Mann (2007) explains that ‘while quantitative research tries to detect significant causal relations and measurable frequencies’ relating to farm succession, ‘qualitative studies are intended both to develop theories and to discover the unexpected’ (p. 370). Indeed, Flick (2014) adds that the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative research findings yields a more a comprehensive picture.

4.6 Problem-Centred Interviews

The next phase of data collection involved a Problem-Centred Interview approach (Witzel, 2000), to peel back the layers and broaden the farmer survey responses. Witzel (2000) explains that Problem-Centred Interviews can be combined with questionnaires in order to ‘solve the problems arising in connection with samples and to relate the results generated by different procedures’ (p. 3). The Problem-Centred Interview is a methodological tool that is based on a dialectic approach towards inductive and deductive procedures that are seen as mutually interrelated and capable of generating new knowledge and theory. Open narrative elements and guided questioning are combined according to the needs of the interview situation and the research ‘problem’. Due to the expansive focus of the three articles underpinning this thesis, this integrated methodology was deemed the most suitable

approach to investigate the human factors that impact intergenerational family farm transfer decision-making processes as it gathers objective evidence on human behaviour as well as on subjective perceptions and ways of processing social reality (Witzel, 2000).

4.6.1 Background and Origin of the Problem-Centred Interview

The Problem-Centred Interview is a form of ethnographic interviewing that emerged from Germany. It was developed by Andreas Witzel (2000) for a project investigating young people's experiences of unemployment immediately after leaving school. In studying this problem, Witzel wanted to investigate the intersections between young people's biographic experiences and wider contexts. However, in seeking to explore specific mechanisms and casual process on this defined topic, he found that most narrative interviewing techniques advocating little intervention on the behalf of the researcher were unsuitable for the investigation. To address this lacuna, Witzel developed the Problem-Centred Interview framework for conducting a focused narrative inquiry (Witzel and Reiter, 2012).

4.6.2 Basic Principles of the Problem-Centred Interview

The Problem-Centred Interview prioritizes narrative accounts that stay true to interviewees' experiences and life worlds, whilst also providing a focus on the 'problem' that the researcher aims to address (Witzel, 2000). Three principle criteria characterize the Problem-Centred Interview: (i) problem-centred orientation, (ii) object orientation and (iii) process orientation (Witzel, 2000; Flick, 2014):

- Problem-centred orientation focuses on the social issue that is relevant to the interview participants. The premise of problem-centred orientation implicitly underpins the notion that research should be directed towards topics that are progressive in nature and contribute to the betterment of society (Witzel and Reiter, 2012). The concept of the 'problem' in this article-based thesis refers to agricultural policy's lack of consideration and

in many cases disregard for the human side of intergenerational family farm transfer.

- Object-orientation allows for methodical flexibility depending on the necessities of the interview situation and research problem under investigation (Witzel, 2000). In the context of this study, beyond focussing on interviewees' narrations and their subjective views on the issue of farm succession and retirement, previously acquired data from the Teagasc Clinic and FARMTRANSFERS surveys as well as knowledge from relevant literature was drawn upon to provide a focus for the interview. The challenge however is to use this information to develop questions in a manner that does not obscure 'the original view of the respondent' (Witzel, 2000, p. 6).
- Finally, process-orientation emphasises that information is developed through the process of the interview. For example, many of the interviewees in this study articulated that they had never thought about what they would do if they retired from farming and therefore they developed their own ideas and understanding of the 'problem' around which the research is centred during the process of the interview.

4.6.3 The Problem-Centred Interview Guideline

Guidelines are a crucial part of the Problem-Centred Interview that act as a supportive device to reinforce the researcher's memory on the topics of research during the interview process in addition to providing 'a framework of orientation to ensure comparability of interviews' (Witzel, 2000, p. 4). The interview guideline is generally devised and formulated upon an intensive review of literature regarding the specifics of the social phenomenon to be analysed (Scheibelhofer, 2005). The guideline includes a preformulated introductory question, which focuses the dialogue on the issue under investigation (Taibi, 2012; Flick, 2014). This question is characterised by its flexible and open structure that facilitates interviewees to share their own perspectives, experiences and interpretations in an open conversation, but at the same time is guided by the specific 'problem' imposed by the researcher. For consecutive questions, the various themes to be tackled during

the interview are outlined in the interview guideline (Scheibelhofer, 2005). By using the guideline as an aide-mémoire, in the form of prompts, as opposed to a rigid structure, Scheibelhofer (2005) explains that the researcher ‘remains flexible enough to follow the interviewee’s story line’ (p. 23). Otherwise the interview situation might turn into a question-and-answer-game commonly used in standardized interviews that does not allow extensive narrations (ibid). Nevertheless, the guideline can also be used as a basis for giving the interview ‘a new turn in the case of a stagnating conversation or an unproductive topic’ to ensure that all topics related to the research question are covered (Flick, 2014, p. 223).

4.6.4 Problem-Centred Interview Communication Strategies

Throughout the Problem-Centred Interview process, the researcher’s role is to develop and implement research strategies that optimise interviewees’ opportunities to explicate their experiences and knowledge on the topic being investigated (Witzel, 2000; Witzel and Reiter, 2012). The assumption is that the interviewee is the expert of her/his life (Flick, 2014). The Problem-Centred Interview is therefore more than a fixed methodological canon, and requires a combination of narrative generating communication strategies and comprehension generating communication strategies (Witzel, 2000). Narrative generating communication strategies gradually disclose the respondent’s view of the problem in an open and inductive way (Witzel and Reiter, 2012), and comprise of a preformulated introductory question, general exploration and ad hoc questioning to generate material. Comprehension-generating communication strategies are formed of explanatory questions in the event that interviewee responses have been evasive or contradictory, and consist of specific exploration and confrontation to support the generation of comprehension. Here, the aspect of deduction comes into play (Witzel, 2000; Taibi, 2012; Witzel and Reiter, 2012). This taxonomy of communication strategies seeks to increase the validity of interpretation and decrease the probability of misunderstanding in the interview process.

In relation to the epistemological challenge of the Problem-Centred Interview, this methodological tool recognises that knowledge is co-produced collaboratively between the interviewee and the researcher. A discursive-dialogic co-production of

knowledge results from the interaction between the researcher's preceding social scientific prior knowledge and the interviewee's practical knowledge merging and intersecting throughout the interview. This iterative and ongoing process during data collection shapes and configures both the participant's and researcher's awareness and comprehension of a certain problem in the social world inquiry (Witzel and Reiter, 2012). Consequently, instead of a 'pure' narration, the Problem-Centred Interview evolves as a result of ongoing dialogue and interaction between the interviewee and the researcher.

4.6.5 Implementation of the Problem-Centred Interview

4.6.5.1 First Phase: Preparation of the Interview Guideline

Before the Problem-Centred Interviews could be carried out, an interview guideline containing preformulated questions on the issues that were identified to be subjectively significant to the sample farming population was drawn up following frequency distribution and cross-tabulation analysis of aggregate data obtained at the Teagasc Clinics using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme. Used in conjunction with an intensive review of relevant family firm and family farm literature on the specific issue (Scheibelhofer, 2005), the quantitative questionnaire data essentially served as building blocks to structure the qualitative interview. By converging its attention to the problem area, a predetermined Problem-Centred Interview guideline allows for greater emphasis on the focal aspects of the issue that needed to be addressed, which may not be tackled in a classic narrative interview setting (Scheibelhofer, 2005). The devised interview guideline in this study reflected the thematic foci of the interview, and also provided a framework of orientation to ensure comparability of interviews (Witzel, 2000; Myers, 2013). The interview guideline was piloted with three randomly selected farmers in attendance at Roscommon Co-Operative Livestock Mart, Co. Roscommon in April 2015. After evaluation and recommendations by the pilot participants, slight amendments were made to the wording of the guideline. The final version was then prepared prior to data collection (see Appendix H).

4.6.5.2 Second Phase: Sample Selection

A 10% (n=19) sample of the 194 farmers recruited at the Teagasc ‘Transferring the Family Farm’ clinics for the interview phase of data collection were sourced using a systematic sampling technique (Kitchen and Tate, 2009) (see Table 4.3 and Map 4.2). Systematic sampling involves selecting cases at regular intervals from the sampling population (N=194). Following the principles of systematic sampling, after deciding on the sample size (n=19), the interval number (k=10) was identified by dividing the sampling population by the sample size ($N/n=k$). After doing this, the integer number (x=8), the point from where to begin the sample, was randomly selected between 1 and the interval number. Starting with the integer number, every k-th unit (every 10th number, because k=10) was then systematically selected thereafter until exhausting the entire sampling population. The sample sequence therefore took the following form: 8, 18, 28, 38 and so on, until having achieved the desired sample size (see Table 4.2). On one occasion, a farmer decided against participating in the study. In this incident, the next unit on this list was selected (i.e. individual number 19 was interviewed instead of number 18).

1	21	41	61	81	101	121	141	161	181
2	22	42	62	82	102	122	142	162	182
3	23	43	63	83	103	123	143	163	183
4	24	44	64	84	104	124	144	164	184
5	25	45	65	85	105	125	145	165	185
6	26	46	66	86	106	126	146	166	186
7	27	47	67	87	107	127	147	167	187
x=8	28	48	68	88	108	128	148	168	188
9	29	49	69	89	109	129	149	169	189
10	30	50	70	90	110	130	150	170	190
11	31	51	71	91	111	131	151	171	191
12	32	52	72	92	112	132	152	172	192
13	33	53	73	93	113	133	153	173	193
14	34	54	74	94	114	134	154	174	N=194
15	35	55	75	95	115	135	155	175	
16	36	56	76	96	116	136	156	176	
17	37	57	77	97	117	137	157	177	
18	38	58	78	98	118	138	158	178	
19	39	59	79	99	119	139	159	179	
20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180	

Table 4.2: Systematic Sample of Problem-Centred Interview Participants.

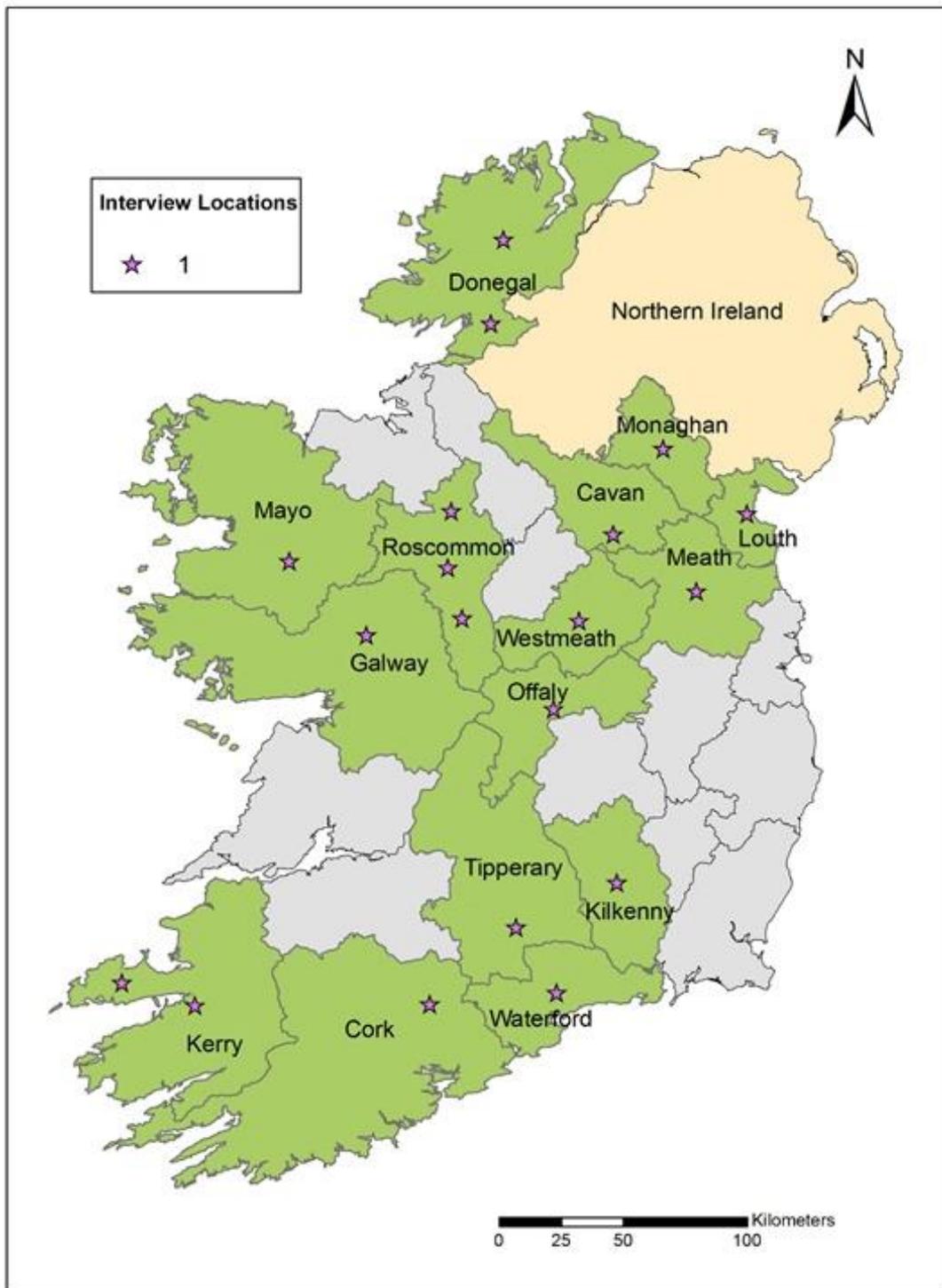
As Teagasc sent invitations to each of their 43,000 farming family clients to attend these clinics, held at 11 different locations throughout the Republic of Ireland (see Table 4.1 and Map 4.1), this systematic sample of 19 interview participants provides an unbiased, nationally representative sample of the Irish farming population spread evenly across a range of diverse regions, farm sizes and operations (see Table 4.3 and Map 4.2).

Participants were first contacted by telephone in April 2015 and subsequently interviewed from May until August 2015. Given the personal nature of the issues under investigation the use of individual face-to-face interviews in the homes of the respondents was deemed the most appropriate means of obtaining information from the senior generation of the farming community. The interviews were digitally recording as recommended by Witzel (2000). Tape recording the interviews allowed for an authentic and precise record of the communication process, which afterwards permitted complete and accurate transcriptions. Since the tape 'memorised' the interviewee's statements, it discharged the researcher from noting everything that was being said, which enabled full concentration on observing situation-related conditions and nonverbal expressions throughout the interview (ibid), as outlined in section 4.6.5.4. The tape recorder was also kept operating for as long as possible, 'in anticipation that although the interview is finished, the informant may not be' (Wolcott, 2005, p. 107).

Pseudo Name	Gender	Age	Farming Enterprise	Farm Size*	Regional Location	Considered Retirement	Succession Plan in Place	Successor Identified	Family's Occupancy of the Farm
Frank	Male	57	Mixed Livestock	< 32.7 ha	West	Yes	Yes	Yes (Two sons)	3 Generations
Luke	Male	69	Mixed Livestock	< 32.7 ha	West	Maybe	No	Yes (Son)	2 Generations
Dominic	Male	77	Mixed Livestock	< 32.7 ha	West	Maybe	No	Yes (Son and Daughter)	2 Generations
Rory	Male	66	Sheep	> 32.7 ha.	West	No	No	No	1 Generation
Andrew	Male	64	Beef	> 32.7 ha.	West	Maybe	No	No	6 Generations
David	Male	70	Beef	> 32.7 ha.	North West	Maybe	No	Yes (Son)	3 Generation
Thomas	Male	80	Sheep and Tillage	< 32.7 ha.	North West	Yes	No	Yes (Daughter)	3 Generations
Sean	Male	75	Dairy and Poultry	> 32.7 ha.	North East	No	No	Yes (Son)	3 Generations
Mark	Male	61	Dairy	> 32.7 ha.	East	No	Yes	Yes (Two sons)	3 Generations
Claire	Female	82	Mixed Livestock & Tillage	> 32.7 ha.	East	No	No	Yes (Two sons)	4 Generations
Josh	Male	70	Tillage (Crop Production)	> 32.7 ha.	South East	Yes	No	Yes (Son)	12 Generations
Jack	Male	72	Dairy	> 32.7 ha.	South East	No	No	Yes (Son)	3 Generations
Ian	Male	67	Dairy	> 32.7 ha.	South	No	No	No	3 Generations
John	Male	70	Mixed Livestock	> 32.7 ha.	South	No	No	Yes (Daughter)	3 Generations
Colm	Male	71	Mixed Livestock	> 32.7 ha.	South West	No	Yes	Yes (Son)	3 Generations
Eimear	Female	65	Beef	< 32.7 ha.	South West	No	No	Yes (Son)	4 Generations
Brian	Male	85	Dairy	> 32.7 ha.	Midlands	Yes	No	Yes (Son)	7 Generations
Richard	Male	67	Beef	< 32.7 ha.	Midlands	Yes	No	Yes (Two sons)	2 Generations
Aoife	Female	68	Mixed Livestock	> 32.7 ha.	Midlands	No	No	Yes (Son)	5 Generations

*The average farm size in the Republic of Ireland was 32.7 Hectares (80.8 Acres) in 2014 (DAFM, 2014).

Table 4.3: Problem-Centred Interview Participant Details



Map 4.2: Geographical Location of Problem-Centred Interview Participants

4.6.5.3 Third Phase: Problem-Centred Interview Structure

The structure of the Problem-Centred Interview in this study took the following form (as recommended by Witzel (2000)): (i) a preformulated introductory question, (ii) general exploration, (iii) ad-hoc questions, (iv) specific exploration, (v) confrontation and (vi) a short-standardized questionnaire.

(i) Preformulated introductory question

The Problem-Centred Interview began with a preformulated introductory question (Witzel, 2000), that was formulated as follows: ‘Have you ever considered transferring management and ownership of the farm to the next generation and retiring? How do you think it would affect your life if you did? What would you miss most?’. While the focus of this initial question was on the specific ‘problem’ under investigation, it was sufficiently broad enough to stimulate the interviewee to answer freely and extensively, in his or her own words on issues that were subjectively significant to them. In fact, Scheiblhofer (2005) explains that the introductory question ‘should stipulate a narration without intervention by the interviewer ... the interviewer should encourage the interviewees to dwell on their own ideas without making any substantive contribution such as asking additional questions, proposing varying possibilities to answer, etc.’ (p. 23). Not unlike the biographical narrative approach, a certain openness in the interview situation was therefore guaranteed through narrative elements within the conversation. During this commentary, field notes of the main points of the dialogue were taken by the researcher (Hoff and Hamblin, 2011), as this information was necessary to cross-reference with the interview guide and in some cases, to formulate follow up questions that delved deeper and/or clarified particular aspects of the interviewee’s initial narrative, as explained in the following sections.

(ii) General exploration

After the interviewee finished their narration in reply to the introductory question, the next stage of the narrative generating communication process consisted of general exploration. General probing serves to successively disclose the subject's

point of view on the ‘problem’, by inviting interviewees to further elaborate on themes already mentioned in the introductory phase (Witzel, 2000; Taibi, 2012; Flick 2014). For this purpose, the researcher summarised the main points of the narrative and asked additional questions such as ‘Could you please tell me about that in more detail?’ and ‘Could you please give me an example of...?’ to provide further detail and material (Witzel and Reiter, 2012; Flick 2014).

A reoccurring theme throughout the interview process, was the perception amongst participants that ‘farmers don’t retire’. This ideology appeared to be embedded in the mind-set of those being interviewed, resulting in their failure to elaborate on this phenomenon, as they felt it was common knowledge/common sense. In order to gain a more in-depth insight into why this cultural expectation exists within the farming community however, farmers were asked to elaborate on the issue. This tactic provided a richer insight into the matter. Colm, a 71 year old mixed livestock farmer from the South West of Ireland and Luke, a 69 year old mixed livestock farmer from the West for example, explained that those who do retire are generally perceived amongst their peers to be lazy, have a defeatist attitude or else have no option but to do so due to ill health. In fact, farmers who farm for as long as possible and ‘die with their boots on’, were idolised by interview participants. This powerful, somewhat territorial drive to hold onto one’s farm at all costs while working hard, taking risks, enduring hardship and pain, can be conceptualised by Rosmonn’s (2010) notion of the ‘agrarian imperative’. This construct provides an explanation for why many farmers’ self-concept tends to be dominated by ‘production-orientated’ identities (Burton and Wilson, 2006, p. 95).

(iii) Ad-hoc questions

In the further course of the interview, ad hoc questioning was necessary when certain topics in the interview guideline were left out by the interviewee, but were needed to secure completeness of thematic areas and comparability of the interviews (Witzel, 2000). Scheibelhofer (2005) argues however that the term ‘ad hoc questions’ ‘is misleading in the sense that they are not invented on the spot but have been drawn up beforehand’ (p. 24). The ad hoc questions in this study arose

from issues in the Problem-Centred Interview guideline that were identified to be subjectively significant to the sample farming population (see Appendix H).

(iv) *Specific exploration*

In the latter stage of the interview, narrative generating communication strategies were complemented by ‘comprehension generating communication strategies with a more active approach in an attitude of understanding’ (Witzel and Reiter, 2012, p. 177). Here, specific exploration was employed to clarify and deepen the researcher’s understanding of the interviewee’s perspectives by mirroring what they had previously said, by questions of comprehension (Flick, 2014). Probing questions such as ‘You talked about... I did not understand this’ as well as inviting comments such as ‘As far as I understood....’ were used by the researcher at this juncture of the interview (Witzel and Reiter, 2012, p. 78). These inquiries also provided the interviewee with the opportunity to reflect on their earlier statements, re-emphasising their respective beliefs and correcting any false statements made by the researcher (Witzel, 2000; Taibi, 2012). This narrative generating communication strategy was performed during the interview process upon participants commenting that their farms and the associated daily and seasonal tasks within, makes them feel good/happy. Farmers were asked to reflect on such statements and clarify what ignites such emotions. Aoife, a 68 year old mixed livestock farmer interviewed from the Midlands of Ireland and Josh, a 70 year old tillage farmer from the South East, provided a greater insight into non-monetary values associated with the farm and farming profession, by revealing that the familiarity and habitual routines within the farm setting offers therapeutic benefits, thus positively contributing to their lifestyle.

(v) *Confrontation*

Confrontation was another strategy utilized to generate further comprehension. Here, the researcher sensitively requested clarification on any contradictory points made by the respondent during the interview process e.g. ‘Before you said that...

but right now you say... did I not understand you correctly?’ (Witzel and Reiter, 2012, p. 78). Comprehensively challenging the interviewee about ‘contradictions and inconsistencies in his or her statements’ (Flick, 2014, p. 224) encouraged respondents to address ambiguities in their accounts and give a more detailed description of their beliefs and views.

This facet of the Problem-Centred Interview was particularly relevant when interviewing farmers who already have or are planning in theory to transfer managerial duties and ownership to the next generation, but were seen to have moved to reassert their authority and influence over the family farm and the critical decisions that are made within it. For example, Brian, an 85 year old dairy farmer from the Midlands of Ireland, who deemed it essential to maintain an authoritative role, despite having transferred ownership of the farm over to his son, was asked whether he would let his son make any decisions on the farm and/or take their views into consideration. Farmers who had transferred their farms to their children but were still in control of the farm’s financial affairs were also challenged. This was the case for Colm, a 71 year old mixed livestock farmer from the South West of Ireland and 65 year old beef farmer Eimear also from the South West, who are still in charge of the farm’s ‘cheque book’. These farmers were asked whether such actions were necessary now that their children were in a position to manage the farm by themselves.

(vi) *Short-standardized questionnaire*

At the very end of the interview, participants were asked to complete a short-standardized questionnaire. This questionnaire was a useful tool for the collection of supplementary data (e.g., socio-demographic data) of the interviewee relevant to the study. Although Witzel (2000) advocates that this questionnaire should be given to interviewees at the beginning of the interview, this study follows Scheibelhofer (2005) and Flick (2014) by concluding the interview session with a questionnaire to ‘keep the more unstructured part of the interview as unrestricted as possible’ (Scheibelhofer, 2005, p. 23). Including the questionnaire at the end also avoided the impression of a formal, hierarchical question-and-answer focussed interview atmosphere. Flick (2014) adds that it makes more sense to use it at the end ‘in order

to prevent its structure of questions and answers from imposing itself on the dialogue in the interview' (p. 225). Furthermore, from the perspective of this study, to give it in the beginning may also have caused problems as contact and trust relationships were still fragile.

4.6.5.4 Fourth Phase: Postscript of the interview

Directly after the end of each Problem-Centred Interview, a brief postscript was drawn up by the researcher to describe situational and non-verbal aspects of the interview (Witzel 2000). It included, for instance, the researcher's impressions of the interview process, of the interviewee's behaviour, questions that made the interviewees seem uncomfortable, the atmosphere throughout the interview process, the interview environment, external influences that disturbed the interview such as a phone call, and so on. These postscripts proved to be helpful in interpreting statements from the interview material post-transcription, as highlighted by Flick (2014). Although the transcriptions on their own provided the researcher with an abundance of useful data, Poland and Pedersen (1998) argue that 'they are silent in several ways' (p. 302). They are, for instance, silent about body language, such as gestures, facial expressions and positioning (ibid). Postscripts thus served as a fruitful supplement.

Such information was particularly useful to document upon concluding interviews with farmers whose spouses had passed away. It was quite overwhelming to experience the level of emotion, sentimentality and pride that such individuals attached to their farms. For example, Claire, an 82 year old mixed livestock and tillage farmer from the East of Ireland, claimed that she could associate her whole 42 year marriage to her late husband with the development of the farm through the years. She recalled their humble beginnings and how they worked together to establish the farm as it stands today. While Claire was visually upset talking about the loss of her husband, she also beamed with pride as she detailed all they had achieved together on the farm. Similarly, 65 year old beef farmer Eimear from the South West of Ireland, became upset as she recalled the journey she and her late husband went on to expand and improve their farm. As such emotion could not be

truly extracted from the tape recordings, it was necessary to detail this information on a postscript directly after the interview.

4.7 Content Analysis of Interview Data

The Problem-Centred Interviews lasted up to 2.5 hours and were digitally recorded, transcribed in full and assigned pseudonyms to protect participant's privacy. Verbatim transcriptions helped capture the interviewee's true voice (Denzin, 1995), and produced a representation of each participant that was as authentic, accurate and trustworthy as possible. The transcription process also allowed 'the researcher to become familiar with the data' (Riessman, 1993, p. 26).

Transcriptions from the Problem-Centred Interviews were analysed according to the requirements of the three articles in this thesis by means of Mayring's (2000) qualitative content analysis, in separate stages. Qualitative content analysis is defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) as 'a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns' (p. 1278). Mayring's (2000) qualitative text analysis technique, originally developed over the course of a study on the psycho-social consequences of unemployment over 30 years ago (Ulich et al., 1985), aims to preserve, develop and transfer the advantages of quantitative content analysis as developed within communication science over to the qualitative-interpretative steps of content analysis (Mayring, 2000). Mayring explains that quantitative components, such as the development of a category system and specific rules of analysis, are the fundament for a qualitative oriented procedure of text interpretation (ibid). Systematic models for deductive category application and inductive category development are therefore central to Mayring's (2000) procedure of qualitative content analysis. The strength of this approach is that it allows for not only analysing manifest meaning of the material, but also for interpreting so-called latent content, which indicates the underlying, implied meaning within the text (Mayring 2000; Kohlbacher, 2006; Mayring, 2014). Given this background, Mayring (2000) defines qualitative content analysis as 'an approach of empirical, methodological [sic!] controlled analysis of texts within

their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification' (p. 5).

Having conducted the interviews personally, a manual approach to the analysis, in which the research content could be invoked, was chosen as it was considered to be more appropriate and reliable than computerised coding. A major concern regarding the use of software packages in content analysis centres upon the notion that computer-assisted methods cannot consider the 'context of content; they only view the text which can result in narrow, incomplete interpretations' (Macnamara, 2005, p. 8). Understanding the 'context' of words and phrases therefore raises a number of impediments to computerized content analysis (Leonard, 2001; Matthes and Kohring, 2008). Indeed, a number of researchers argue that an algorithmic analysis of content remains limited in its capacity to understand latent meanings or the subtleties and complexiveness of human language (Linderman, 2001; Simon, 2001; Crowley et al., 2002; Conway, 2006; Lewis et al., 2013). The systematic rigor and contextual awareness of the human contribution to content analysis is therefore paramount (Neuendorf, 2002; Matthes and Kohring, 2008). Sjøvaag and Stavelin (2012) add that 'human labour is still considered superior for the coding of latent content' (p. 219).

Given the limitations of computerised coding in a complex data set, a manual approach was therefore warranted for the purposes of this study in order to extract data relating to the underlying human dynamics affecting the intergenerational family farm transfer process from the interview transcriptions. For example, in relation to article 2 in this thesis, due to the 'imperceptible, insidious and invisible' nature of symbolic violence as a mode of domination (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016, p. 148), the identification of practices and strategies of symbolic violence relied on the researcher's informed knowledge of Bourdieu's conceptual arsenal to detect and interpret the subtle meanings of the participants' discourse. Indeed, Clare (2012) previously pointed out that it is the researcher's skills and ability to carry out quality data analysis that is crucial, not the capabilities of a software package programme.

4.7.1 Deductive Category Application and Inductive Category Development

One key characteristic of Mayring's (2000) qualitative content analysis approach is that it allows for the flexible use of deductive or inductive reasoning or a combination of both approaches in data analysis. Tesch (1990) previously noted that deductive and inductive and content analysis should not be regarded as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary. For the purpose of this study, a two-step process of qualitative content analysis that integrates deductive category application and inductive category development, were employed for each of the three articles which make up the core of this thesis. Witzel (2000) explains that the 'interplay of inductive and deductive thinking contributes to increasing the user's knowledge' (p. 1).

Data for each article in the study was first analysed deductively. In deductive category application, previously defined, theory-based categories are systematically assigned to code the text (Mayring, 2000). In article 1, the definitions to construct the categories were based on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, with associated characteristics of esteem, honour, prestige, respect, recognition and position. The definitions to construct the categories in article 2 were based on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power and the three interrelated functions of symbolic violence: cognition, communication, and social differentiation (Swartz 1997). Finally, the three dimensions of Rowles's (1983a) concept of insiderness; physical, social and autobiographical, constructed the categories in article 3. The use of theory-driven, pre-established categories resulted in a well-organized initial phase of data analysis. One limitation of deductive coding however is that text may contain important ideas or perspectives which do not fall under the pre-designed set of categories (Kulatunga, et al., 2007; Drisko and Maschi, 2015).

Following on from the application of the previously determined theoretically derived categories, a second analytical step referred to as inductive category development (Mayring, 2000), was therefore also necessary. The inductive procedure differs from deductive category application in that categories are tentative and step by step deduced, bearing in mind the theoretical background and the research question of the study, which 'determines the aspects of the textual material taken into account' (Mayring 2000, p. 4). The advantage of this applying

this analytical approach lies in the fact that information is garnered directly from the transcriptions ‘without imposing preconceived categories’ (Hsieh and Shannon, p. 1279), thus preventing the researcher from affirming only their individual pre-assumptions and being trapped by their own ethnocentric view. Drisko and Maschi (2015) add that the development of coding categories close to and grounded in the original data by means of inductive coding ensures that ‘the views and voices of research participants are given priority over the ideas and theories of the researchers’ (p. 103). The combination of deductive and inductive content analysis resulted in three thorough, coherent and comprehensive final coding agendas that incorporated theory and material (see Appendix I).

4.8 Ethical Considerations/Issues in this Study

The final area to be outlined and discussed is the ethical principles and procedures grounding this study. All social scientific research conducted with human beings necessitates a consideration of ethics, ‘since it is based on data from people about people’ (Punch, 2000, p. 75). Furthermore, Silverman (2014) argues that qualitative methods, such as Problem-Centred Interviews in the context of this study, with their emphasis on entering the respondent’s life world, encounter ethical issues that require particular attention. Ethical approval for this article-based thesis was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the National University of Ireland, Galway (see Appendix J). The basic principles and appropriate steps of ethical research set out in by the University’s Research Ethics Committee are thus complied with to the highest possible standards in this study. In line with the National University of Ireland, Galway Research Ethics Committee guideline (NUIG, 2013), the primary ethical issues that were considered by the researcher during the design and implementation of the research process related to (i) informed consent, (ii) confidentiality and anonymity and (iii) participant wellbeing. An outline of how each of these ethical concerns were managed and addressed in this study will be presented in the next sections.

4.8.1 Informed Consent

The principle of informed consent is fundamental to ethical research because it concerns an individual's absolute right to choose to participate in a study and if necessary, to withdraw from the research at any time, without penalty (O'Neill, 2002; Cardno, 2003; Berg and Lune, 2014). Berg (2006) explains that informed consent means 'the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation' (p. 78). For the quantitative phase of this study, in order to avoid misleading potential respondents, information relating to the purpose of the study was clearly outlined on the cover page of the Teagasc Clinic questionnaire (see Appendix B). This information was relevant, unbiased, avoided excessive detail and written in language that was intended to be easily understood by the participants prior to them deciding whether or not to complete the questionnaire (Heglesson, 2005). A written consent form, inviting respondents to supply their contact details for interview at the next phase of data collection was also located at the back of the questionnaire (see Appendix B). After sourcing the desired number of survey respondents who had agreed to be interviewed using a systematic sampling technique (Kitchen and Tate, 2009), the selected samples were then each contacted by telephone in April 2015 to confirm their willingness to participate further in the study. All but one of these selected farmers agreed to take part. In the case of the one farmer who decided against being interviewed, the next individual on the list was selected in their place (i.e. individual number 19 was chosen instead of number 18) (see Table 4.2). A verbal consent for participation in the qualitative stage of the research was subsequently obtained from all in agreement by the researcher. A suitable time and date for interview was also organised during this telephone conversation.

For the qualitative phase of this study, informed consent was revisited prior to commencing the Problem-Centred Interview, by providing recruited participants with an information pack, which outlined accurate details of the study and an overview of what their participation would involve (Berg and Lune, 2014). Selected farmers were also made aware that their participation in the study was completely voluntary, and that they had an unrestricted right to withdraw from taking part in the research at any time, without providing any explanation (O'Neill, 2002; Berg

and Lune, 2014). Participants were also offered the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and/or seek clarification about material contained in the information pack. Once interview participants indicated that they had fully understood the study and what was expected from them, they were politely asked to sign a written consent form. All 19 farmers agreed to sign this form; resulting in no withdrawals from the qualitative phase of this study.

4.8.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity of participants are central to ethical research practice in social research (Crow and Wiles; 2008 Berg and Lune, 2014). Confidentiality is preliminary concerned with protecting the research participants' identity in the data collected (Berg and Lune, 2014). In this study, significant amounts of data that conceivably may be perceived as private by the senior generation of the farming community, were collected, e.g. retirement intentions, age and farm type. It was therefore essential to take necessary precautions to assure study participants that the data they provided would be treated in the strictest confidence and that their name or address would not appear on any document or report arising from the study. Following standards set down by the National University of Ireland, Galway's Data Protection Policy regarding the retention and storage of data as a guideline (NUIG, 2006), and in compliance with the requirements of the Irish Government's Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003, a number of steps were put in place to protect participants' privacy. Data from paper forms, such as completed survey responses and written consent forms, which contained respondents' names, addresses and in some cases e-mail addresses, will be held in a secure storage facility, located in the Discipline of Geography, at the National University of Ireland, Galway, for a period of ten years after the completion of the study, in line with the National University of Ireland, Galway, Code of Good Practice in Research document (NUIG, 2012). Access to this personal information was restricted to the principal researcher and supervisory team. Data from electronic forms, such as coded questionnaire data, audio recorded interview data and verbatim transcripts were saved in three separate encrypted database files on a password-protected computer at the National University of

Ireland, Galway, also for a period of ten years. Again, only the principal researcher and supervisory team have access to these files. Due to the personal and intimate nature of the data gathered in this study, the importance of protecting participants' anonymity during the research process has also been recognised in this study. Guidelines issued by the Data Protection Commissioner (2016) on the use of personally identifiable information, suggest that anonymization and pseudo-anonymization of data should be the optimal approach employed 'to protect the privacy rights of individual data subjects' (p. 36). Anonymization of data in this study was ensured by replacing the participants' real names with pseudonyms at the earliest possible opportunity i.e. at the point of transcription (Clark, 2006). The choice of pseudonym applied to participants in this study was guided by Ipfohen (2009), who suggests that pseudonyms should be sufficiently different to the individuals' real name to avoid deductive discovery. Only the principal researcher and supervisory team had access to the participants' real names.

4.8.3 Participant Wellbeing

The need to consider and protect the participants' wellbeing during the research process is a cornerstone of ethical research practice (Ipfohen, 2009). During this study, the risk of psychological or physical harm to participants was negligible, however it was recognised that the process of engaging in an in-depth Problem-Centred Interview could arouse an emotional response among respondents. Patton (2002) explain that engaging in a 'directed reflective process' (p. 405) during in-depth interview, can increase the interviewee's awareness of their life story. While this increased knowledge can create possibilities for introspection and growth, it also has the potential to open wounds in a harmful way if not handled sensitively (ibid). Furthermore, in researching lives, West and Merrill (2009) argue that there is always the possibility of coming across unpredictable or distressing territory. For this reason, researchers are advised to prepare in advance a set of guidelines for how they would respond to a situation of participant distress (ibid). Adhering to recommendations set forth by Patton (2002) and West and Merrill (2009) concerning study participants' wellbeing, a protocol for managing potential emotional distress was developed prior to commencing qualitative data collection

(see Appendix K). Throughout the interview process, the researcher remained alert for signs of anxiety, distress, or discomfort on the part of the participant and followed the response agenda for emotional distress where necessary. Such an incident occurred when interviewing Ian, a 67 year old dairy farmer from the South of Ireland, who does not have a successor in situ to take over the farm, as none of his children are interested in pursuing farming as a career. Upon reflecting about what would happen to the farm in the future because of this, he became quite upset at the thoughts of the farm going into disarray or eventually being sold to someone outside his family. Ian was subsequently asked whether he would like to take a break from the interview. He agreed and the tape recorder was switched off up until the point Ian was ready to resume the interview.

To conclude each interview, study participants were provided with a token gift to acknowledge their help and contribution to the study, as recommended by Iversen (2009). In addition, interview transcripts and a report on the research findings were sent to participants upon completion if requested.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodological approach of the study. To sum up, the research methodology carried out for this study was rigorous, accurate, professional and confidential. In all the participants of the research were extremely interested in being involved and were hugely interesting in terms of what they had to offer. They gave freely of their time and provided an honesty and insightfulness of their experiences that allowed this research to evolve in such a meaningful and practical way. A clear demonstration of this can be seen in the next three separate, yet interrelated journal articles which make up the core of this thesis.

Chapter 5

Article 1

Chapter 5

Article 1: Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2016) Cease agricultural activity forever? Underestimating the importance of symbolic capital, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 44, 164–176.



Cease agricultural activity forever? Underestimating the importance of symbolic capital



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 24 August 2015

Received in revised form

14 December 2015

Accepted 30 January 2016

Available online 11 February 2016

Keywords:

Family farming

Succession

Retirement

Symbolic capital

Family firm

Farm viability

ABSTRACT

Similar to what is occurring on a global scale, Irish agriculture is populated by an older generation of farmers. Consequently, intergenerational family farm transfer is increasingly viewed as crucial to the survival, continuity and future sustainability of the family farm and agricultural sector. A review of existing research highlights how financial incentives that encourage succession and retirement from farming have stimulated little change in the behavioural intentions and attitudes amongst elderly farmers. Drawing on two previously disparate literatures (transferring the family firm and transferring the family farm) and applying Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital as a theoretical framework, this paper sets aside financial enticements and presents an insightful, nuanced analysis of the human factors that influence the process of transferring the family farm from the perspective of the senior generation. This research employs a multi-method triangulation design, consisting of self-administered questionnaires in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews, to acquire data on the complex psychodynamic and sociodynamic emotions involved in the process. The prominent themes to emerge from the empirical data are farmer's concerns regarding potential loss of identity, status and control upon transferring management and ownership of the family farm and retiring. Many older farmers appear to prioritise the building and maintenance of their personal accumulation of symbolic capital rather than ceasing agricultural activity. The paper concludes by suggesting that future policies and programmes encouraging family farm transfer must take into account the pervasiveness of symbolic capital and work within this structure to develop effective strategies that addresses the emotional well-being of elderly farmers.

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1. Introduction

Interest in intergenerational family farm transfer and its impact on the farming economy has grown considerably amid concerns about the sustainability of an ageing farming population (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Global demographic trends reveal an inversion of the age pyramid with those aged 65 years and over constituting the fastest growing sector of the farming community. In Europe, preliminary results from Eurostat's most recent Farm Structure Survey indicate that 6% of farmers were aged 35 and under in 2013, while over 55% were aged 55 and older (European Commission, 2013; European Commission, 2015). The situation in the Republic of Ireland is closely analogous to that of its European

counterparts; in 2010, only 6.2% of Irish landowners were under 35 years of age whilst 51.4% were over 55 years old (CSO, 2012). Between 2000 and 2010, those over 65 years increased by 31%, while those within the 55 to 65 age bracket increased by 26%, with a 52.8% reduction in the amount of farmers aged less than 35 years recorded (ibid). This 'greying' of the agricultural community, will see the number of aging farmers facing farm transfer accelerate in the coming decades (Mishra and El-Osta, 2007), a situation meriting serious and timely investigation.

Intergenerational farm transfer is a multifaceted process that encompasses three distinct but interrelated processes: succession, inheritance and retirement (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Succession is viewed as managerial control which is gradually relinquished; retirement is associated with the owner withdrawing from active participation in the business of the farm, while inheritance is the final stage when all of the business assets are legally transferred to the successor (Errington, 2002). Whilst conceptually

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.01.016>

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Figure 5.1: Article 1 cover page

5.1 Abstract

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Keywords

Family Farming, Succession, Retirement, Symbolic Capital, Family Firm, Farm Viability

5.2 Introduction

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Intergenerational farm transfer is a multifaceted process that encompasses three distinct but interrelated processes: succession, inheritance and retirement (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Succession is viewed as managerial control which is gradually relinquished; retirement is associated with the owner withdrawing from active participation in the business of the farm, while inheritance is the final stage when all of the business assets are legally transferred to the successor (Errington, 2002). Whilst conceptually separate, these processes are linked, with succession seen as the 'mirror image' of retirement; as the new generation succeeds, the old generation retires (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Errington and Lobley 2002; Uchiyama et al., 2008, Lobley, 2010). The terms 'succession' and 'retirement' will thus be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

Intergenerational family farm transfer is a complex and highly topical issue both in terms of society and farm sustainability. A low rate of entry into farming will lead to fewer numbers of farmers and may have profound implications for the industry, the countryside, land use and the broader sustainability of rural communities

(Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Goeller, 2012). Equally, it has been recognised that the ‘twin process’ of succession and retirement if not addressed adequately can be a period of considerable stress, both emotionally and financially, for family farm households (Burton and Walford, 2005). More broadly, many investigations of intergenerational family farm transfer have limited attention to the lack of successors willing to take over, despite the well documented deep-rooted reluctance by elderly farmers to transfer managerial duties to younger generations and retire from farming (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Kimhi and Lopez, 1997; Gillmor, 1999; Foskey, 2005; Bika, 2007; Loblely et al., 2010; Bogue, 2013; NRN, 2013). The prevailing reason for an ageing farming population from census to census is also reported to be the lack of ‘new blood’ entering the industry (ADAS, 2004; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; DGIP, 2012; Zagata and Lošťák, 2014). However, despite changes in agricultural support regimes, challenging economic environments and socio-cultural changes in farming, the upsurge in demand from young people for education and training in agriculture in the Republic of Ireland and beyond provides contradictory evidence and indicates a renewed interest in pursuing farming as a career (Teagasc, 2011; Whitehead et al., 2012; Baker, 2012). Therefore, while the successor is undoubtedly a crucial player in the succession and retirement planning process, it is crucial to realise that the successor is not alone in resisting the process. In many cases the older generation also experience difficulties actively engaging in or mobilising the process and as a result often exerts strong pressures to avoid the emotion-laden issues of succession and retirement (Lansberg, 1988). A particular focus of this paper therefore centres upon the notion that older farmer’s emotions are not given due consideration (Kirkpatrick, 2013) when discussing the interrelated processes of intergenerational family farm transfer: succession, inheritance and retirement.

Undue emphasis on economic aspects of intergenerational family farm transfer has led to an overly simplified view of the factors influencing the decision-making process. Agricultural policy, designed to assist older farmers to exit farming focuses on encouraging those generating low returns to retire from the industry but these are clearly not designed to deal with the specific issues facing ageing farmers (Rogers et al., 2013). This human dynamic is disregarded with little value placed on the notion that farming is not just a job or something driven by a desire to make

money; it is a passion and a lifestyle (ibid). A byzantine mix, whereby the already problematic economic business dimension is further complicated by a more complex emotional aspect. It is naïve therefore of policy makers and practitioners not to consider the potent mass of emotional and psychological values attached to the farming occupation for older farmers 'beyond the economic' (Pile, 1990, p. 147).

To explore this further, family firm literature containing a plethora of research concerning the psychodynamic and sociodynamic factors that influence and hinder the succession and retirement process from the perspective of the senior family business owner and leader, hereafter referred to as the incumbent (e.g. Christensen, 1953; Kets de Vries, 1985; Ward, 1987; Lansberg, 1988; Handler, 1994; Sharma et al., 2001; Kets de Vries, 2003; Sharma et al., 2003; Palliam et al., 2011) will be drawn on. The psychodynamic approach, originally developed by Sigmund Freud in the late 19th century, emphasizes the interplay of unconscious psychological processes in determining human thought, feelings, and behaviour which ultimately shape one's personality (Bernstein et al., 2006). While psychodynamic emotions concern individual's sense of self, sociodynamic emotions are seen as dynamic systems that emerge from the interactions and relationships in which they take place (Mesquita and Boiger, 2014). Of great interest here is that an incumbent's dominant control over the firm makes them adjourn and defer succession and retirement planning 'for lifestyle, psychological, and behavioural reasons' and thereby they often become the most significant barrier to the process (Palliam et al., 2011, p. 27). This paper, in particular, draws on Lansberg's (1988) theoretical hypotheses of resistance to succession and retirement planning in the family business from the perspective of the incumbent. According to Lansberg's theory, resistance or at best ambivalence towards the process can be explained by the understanding that succession decisions tend to be emotionally loaded (ibid).

There is however no great depth of research that explores these issues in relation to the family farm business resulting in a clear lack of understanding of the views of elderly farmers, on their concerns, fears, needs and future plans. Drawing on two previously disparate literature (transferring the family firm and family farm), this paper sets aside financial enticements and presents a more nuanced analysis of the factors that influence the unwillingness and reluctance amongst older farmers

towards relinquishing management and ownership of the family farm and ultimately begin the process of their retirement (Gillmor, 1999; Bika, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). In addition to the policy-related contribution of this study, this paper is theoretically innovative in using Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital (i.e. resources available to an individual on the basis of esteem, recognition, status, or respect in a particular social setting) (Bourdieu, 1986) to comprehend the human factors governing the behaviour patterns of elderly farmers. Indeed, according to Glover (2011), symbolic capital is ideological, relating to a farmer's sense of identity and giving them a 'sense of belonging in society' (p. 9). Therefore, instead of focussing on the 'mechanics' of family farm transfer (Price and Conn, 2012), we aim to dissect the role that emotional ties to the farm and farming occupation play on decision-making processes surrounding farm succession and retirement from the older farmer's perspective. Consequently, this paper has global relevance and will be of particular interest to countries like the Republic of Ireland where the age profile of the farming community and the rate of succession and retirement have been matters of concern and unease for decades (Commins, 1973; Commins and Kelleher 1973; Gillmor, 1999; Bogue, 2013; NRN, 2011, 2013).

The next section reviews the family firm and family farm transfer literature. This is followed by an outline of the theoretical framework adopted and a summary of the methodology employed in the research. Research findings are then discussed with the latter part of the paper drawing some exploratory conclusions.

5.3 Transferring the Family Firm and Family Farm Literature Review

5.3.1. 'Greying' of the Farming Population

The farming community increasingly consists of a farm population with a high age profile. This 'greying' of the farming population has major implications for government policy (Rogers et al., 2013) raising concerns about the need to reinvigorate the industry with new, or at the very least fresh, blood, alongside arguments that an elderly farming population is likely to be less competitive in the current market place because they are slower to adopt new innovative agricultural technologies (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). In the Republic of Ireland for example, it is argued that significant changes and modifications to boost the competitiveness

and production efficiency of Irish agriculture through land mobility (i.e. transfer of land from one farmer to another, or from one generation to the next) and structural change are required in order to realise ambitious growth targets set out in Food Harvest 2020 (DAFF 2010; Läpple and Hennessy 2012; Bogue, 2013; NRN 2013). Specifically, not unlike elsewhere in the world, there have been calls for deterrents obstructing the passage of farmland from the older to younger generation of farmers to be overcome as the intergenerational transfer of the family farm is viewed as crucial for future prosperity in the farming industry (Connolly, 2009). In the Republic of Ireland however, the owner-operator of land tenure is particularly inflexible because entry to the sector is almost entirely by inheritance or purchasing land; entry via leasing of land or partnership arrangements, common in many countries throughout the world, are not widely practiced (NESC, 1997; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007). A recent report on ‘Land Mobility and Succession in Ireland’ claims the lack of land mobility currently experienced is stifling agricultural growth and development by preventing young ‘enthusiastic’ farmers gaining access to productive assets (Bogue, 2013).

In an effort to alleviate concerns of an ageing farming population and improve competitiveness, the Irish policy environment has explored various methods of stimulating and enticing intergenerational family farm transfer for some time. These included several well-documented financial incentives which encouraged early retirement from farming, albeit very little change in attitudes towards intergenerational transfer of the farm has come about (Ryan, 1995; Gillmor, 1999; Bika, 2007). Early retirement schemes have had only marginal success in restructuring the farming sector. Ryan (1995) suggested weak participation was the result of several factors including low retirement benefits and a cultural resistance to leave farming. Other attempts included a concerted effort to ensure the most tax efficient means of transferring ownership and wealth of farms (Meehan, 2012), which again yielded nothing like the required result. In fact, despite these financial incentives, reluctance of older farmers to exit or retire from the farming sector to facilitate young farmers who have a desire to start up persists.

The acceptability of retirement schemes from farming is likely to be a personal dilemma for many elderly farmers particularly as they adjust to a major change in their occupational role (Commins, 1973; Gillmor 1999). Understanding when to

relinquish control from the family farm can be difficult to recognise for many farmers in that few other businesses generate the emotional connections that farming does (Kirkpatrick, 2013; Rogers et al., 2013). Farming life throughout the world is characterised by the almost inseparable intimate integration of home, work, memories and family tradition (Barclay et al., 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Uchiyama and Whitehead, 2012). In fact, Lobley et al. (2004) and previously Gillmor (1977; 1999) pointed to distinctive characteristics of farmers, in that they tend to have deep rooted emotional attachment to the key business assets they own, such as particular tracts of land or animals, thereby increasing their reluctance to relinquish ownership and leave farming. Kirkpatrick (2013) argues that in many cases the older farmer's sense of place and purpose attached to the family farm supersedes economic imperatives encouraging the transfer of the family farm to the next generation. This indicates the overwhelming significance of lifestyle over profit (Price and Conn 2012). Recent research conducted in the Republic of Ireland, touched on this, alluding to the fact that 'apart from the economic driver of payments retaining elderly farmers on land, there are also psychological drivers involved' and 'addressing the issue of low levels of mobility must also take cognisance of these psychological barriers' (NRN, 2013, p. 6). This research came 40 years after Commins (1973) first stressed that retirement policy, 'with economic objectives, should not ignore possible social consequences or wider issues of human welfare' (p. 45). However, to date, such recommendations have largely been ignored, resulting in the formulation and implementation of largely unsuccessful farm transfer policy strategies, such as Early Retirement Schemes, which have little or no regard for elderly farmer's emotions. It is in probing these issues further that this paper now turns.

5.3.2 Propensity of the Incumbent to Step Aside and Retire

The incumbent who hands over the leadership role of the family business and the successor, who takes over, are the two key stakeholders in the succession process (Sharma et al., 2001; Whitehead et al., 2012). Since Christensen's (1953) study of succession planning and management in family businesses, this issue has gained significant prominence (Handler, 1994; Brockhaus, 2004) and is now an essential

subject matter of research in family business literature (De Massis et al., 2008). Succession is seen to be the ultimate test of success for the family firm (Glover, 2011), with significant practical implications for the continuity of the firm (Handler, 1990). In general, the indications are that the degree to which a family business engages in the succession process is positively influenced by the propensity of the incumbent to step aside and the presence of a capable successor to take over the firm (Danco, 1982; Palliam et al., 2011). Sharma et al. (2001, citing Hofer and Charan, 1984) note however that the likelihood of a successful professional management transition is practically zero if the incumbent is not committed to the process. Similarly, in relation to retirement, Sharma et al. (2001) highlight that the extent of effective intergenerational transfer planning in family businesses is directly related to the incumbent's plan to retire from the firm. Indeed, as far back as the 1950s, Christensen (1953) argued that 'the first and foremost barrier that stands in the way of some provision for retirement planning, is the top manager himself' (p. 129). Therefore, the responsibility for directing succession and retirement planning lies heavily on the support of the incumbent (Christensen, 1953; Lansberg, 1988; Kelly et al. 2000; Palliam et al., 2011), who appears to have 'the power to shape the succession process for better or ill' (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 31).

From a family farming perspective, there is evidence of negative consequences that may occur if the older farmer is unable to release control of the family farm (Potter and Lobley 1992; Errington and Lobley 2002). It has been argued that failure to do so can have adverse impacts on not only the development trajectory of a farm but also the productivity and innovativeness of the agricultural industry as a whole (Gillmor, 1999; Lobley, 2010) As such, optimal timing is considered crucial to a successful family farm transfer (Lange, et al., 2011). A potential difficulty in passing on the legacy of the family farm is that successors are ready to begin their careers, but parents are not always ready to hand over the farm (Keating, 1996). According to Keating (1996) 'while some farmers plan to retire in their late sixties, many do not expect to retire at all' (p. 414). Research suggests that the older generation's decision to never retire or only semi retire is impacting on the younger generation's ability to embark on a true and meaningful career path of full time farming, and under such incidences it could take 20 years for them to assume

management of the farm (Keating, 1996; Kirkpatrick 2012). This is a major concern as recent research carried out in the United Kingdom by ADAS (2007) indicates that younger farmers are becoming increasingly impatient as they yearn for greater independence, recognition and opportunities for leadership on the family farm.

Such arguments have led family business researchers to the hypothesis that initial satisfaction with the succession process will 'depend on the extent to which an incumbent is willing to step aside' (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 23). Ultimately, this requires a mental withdrawal from the business as much as a physical withdrawal (Whitehead et al., 2012, p. 220). If an incumbent is willing to do this, 'a major impediment would be removed' (Palliam et al., 2011, p. 27) and 'the likelihood of a satisfactory succession process increases because such willingness indicates the incumbent's acknowledgement that new leadership is needed and, possibly, acceptance of the successor as a suitable replacement' (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 23). Unfortunately, however, the intergenerational transfer experience of most is 'one of frustration, conflict and unfulfilled dreams' (Glover, 2011, p. 4) as the incumbent is unwilling to delegate sufficient responsibility to the younger generation (Kets de Vries, 1985; Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001).

A major concern is that potential successors may lose interest and motivation continually working in the incumbent's shadow and therefore decide to leave the family firm in pursuit of more fulfilling opportunities elsewhere, resulting in the self-destruction of the business (Simms 1988; De Massis et al., 2008). This phenomenon is known as 'corporeuthanasia' which Danco (1982) defines as 'the owner's act of wilfully killing off the business he loves by failing to provide in his lifetime for a viable organization with clear continuity (p. 5). Similarly, from a family farming perspective, Kirkpatrick (2013) notes that 'farm operations that would be considered financially sound, well-managed businesses can slowly collapse and fail because the older generation is unable or unwilling to face the contradicting desires of seeing the next generation succeed yet retain the independence and self-identity farming provides' (p. 3). Goeller (2012) also warns that 'without thoughtful planning for succession, the unintended consequence is that there are fewer and fewer young farmers entering the business and ownership of land becomes concentrated into fewer and older hands' (p. 150) which can also have adverse effects on the sustainability and indeed survival of rural communities (ibid).

5.3.3 The Incumbent's Resistance to Succession and Retirement

While the incumbent is often aware of the need for devising a succession plan, they can experience overwhelming personal psychodynamic and sociodynamic deterrents against managing their exodus from the family business and thus fail to prioritise it (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001).

A recurrent theme in family firm literature involves attempting to comprehend why the incumbent has difficulty and indeed is unable to 'let go' their control and power to dictate the daily running of the business (e.g. Kets de Vries, 1985; Lansberg, 1988; Handler, 1990; Handler, 1994; Sharma et al., 2001; Kets de Vries, 2003). In family businesses, leadership, centrality and power have been identified as central needs for the incumbent (Lansberg, 1988, Kets de Vries, 2003). Kets de Vries (1985) suggest that in many cases, an incumbent may resist intergenerational management transitions because they have difficulty envisaging life without an important management position in the family business. For an incumbent, surrendering leadership of the firm and dissociating oneself from the business is often 'experienced as the first step toward losing control over life itself' (Lansberg, 1988, p. 124). In addition, an incumbent may also be reluctant to step aside and relinquish control and ownership of their business because this would be surrendering their identity (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001). As the incumbent has spent a substantial proportion of their lives, not just their career, developing and operating their business, it is often their most significant creation and it has grown to become an integral part of their inner self, giving them meaning and a sense of purpose in life (Lansberg, 1988, Palliam et al., 2011). The more central an incumbent's work role is connected to their overall sense of self and purpose, the more adverse their retirement expectations are (Handler and Kram, 1988; Gee and Baillie, 1999; Gagne et al., 2011).

An incumbent may also resist the process as they fear 'losing status in the family and the community as both may be closely intertwined with his or her role in the family business' (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 22). Potential change to business values and philosophy, management styles and an inability to face his or her mortality further exacerbate these difficulties (Lansberg, 1988; Simms 1988; Sharma et al.,

2001, Kets de Vries, 2003, McLeod, 2012). Combined, these factors negatively influence the incumbent's motivation and ability to exit the business.

Similarly, drawing on the family farm transfer literature from Ireland and further afield (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Kimhi and Lopez, 1997; Gillmor, 1999; Defra, 2002, Vare, 2006; Bika, 2007; Calus et al., 2008; Lobley et al., 2010; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Barclay et al., 2012), it is clear that in spite of the inherent desire to keep the family farm in the family, there is considerable reluctance and resistance amongst the older generation towards relinquishing control and ownership and retiring. Consequently, there is a lack of land mobility (i.e. access to land) leading to an inevitable decrease in the number of farm transfers. In the Republic of Ireland for example, entry to farming through channels other than inheritance is rare due to both the limited availability and the high cost of land (Hennessy and Rehman, 2007). It is estimated that only 0.3% of the total land area in Ireland was put on the market in 2011 (Irish Farmer's Journal, 2012). However, succession and particularly retirement is also recognised as a major transitional challenge for the older generation of farmers. According to Price and Conn (2012), 'allowing for succession is an emotional rather than rational process (p. 101), because for many, farming is a not just a profession but a 'way of life' (Barclay et al. 2012; Price and Conn, 2012).

5.4 The Importance of Symbolic Capital

A key aspect of this discussion is to consider the role that Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital plays on the emotional capacity of elderly farmers to accept the inevitable challenges and changes brought about by intergenerational transfer of the family farm. Bourdieu, essentially concerned with what people do in their day-to-day lives (Jenkins 1992), introduced the concept of symbolic capital in his analysis of social relationships in pre-capitalist, agrarian societies (Forest and Johnson, 2002). Although this idea has been applied more broadly in sociological research, and across a range of social issues, part of Bourdieu's appeal, is that his work is so prolific and empirically documented. Despite this however, there has been little or no research carried out internationally, on the link between symbolic capital and

intergenerational family farm transfer. Additionally, there has been limited research carried out on this potential correlation from a family firm perspective.

Before discussing the core theoretical framework, it is necessary in the first instance to introduce Bourdieu's primary 'thinking tools' premising the sociology of everyday life, a complex theoretical triad consisting of 'habitus', 'capital' and 'field' (Bourdieu, 1977). These three cornerstones of Bourdieu's theory of practice (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008) interrelate with each other, both conceptually and empirically (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), as exemplified by the following formula for studying social practice: '(Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101). This equation can be qualified as: 'practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position of power (capital) within the current state of play of that social arena (field)' (Maton, 2008, p. 51). As an agent is positioned within a field by virtue of their total accumulation of symbolic capital, which can be gained from any combination of capital available to them in society (Nicholls, 2005), and the practices one engages in to accumulate (this type of/such) capital is structured by their habitus (Zarei and Pirnajmuddin, 2014), this pseudo-mathematical equation helps us to see how symbolic capital cannot be detached from Bourdieu's interlocking conceptual arsenal and must be understood as a relational concept (see Figure 5.2).

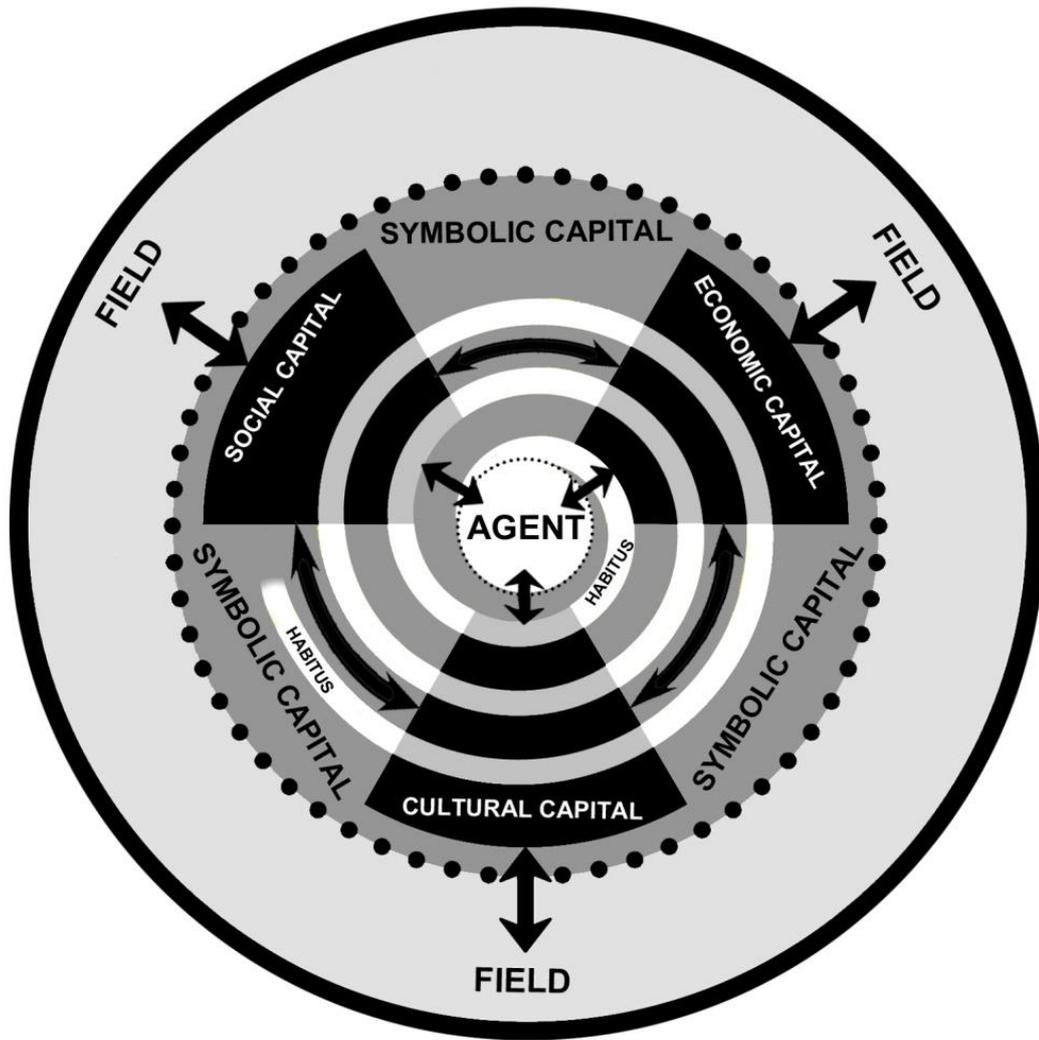


Figure. 5.2: Diagrammatic Representation of Symbolic Capital Illustrating its Relationship with the Rest of Bourdieu's Interlocking Concepts.

In economic thought, the term capital originally meant 'an accumulated sum of money, which could be invested in the hope of future profits' (Field, 2003, p. 12). According to Fuchs (2003) 'what distinguishes Bourdieu from orthodox forms of Marxism is that he does not reduce all aspects of social life to the economy' (p. 391). Bourdieu (1986) asserts that it is in fact 'impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory' (p. 242). On the structural level of society Bourdieu (1984) therefore distinguishes four different types of distinct, yet inextricably linked forms of capital, each of which can be utilised by an agent in a social field: economic capital in the sense of Marx

(money, profits), cultural capital (namely knowledge and skills), social capital (acquaintances, networks and social connections) and symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is constituted when the different forms of capital (economic, social and cultural) are socially perceived and recognized as legitimate bases for claiming esteem, honour, prestige, respect and recognition within a given field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This derivative form of capital also gives symbolic power (form of authority) over other agents within a field. According to Swartz (1997), symbolic capital is ‘a form of power that is not perceived as power but as legitimate demands for recognition, deference, obedience, or the services of others’ (p. 90). A key property of symbolic capital is that it is not strictly intrinsic in an individual, but in fact developed as a result of social interaction (Christian and Bloome, 2004). Webb et al., (2002) explain that ‘prestige and a glowing reputation, for example, operate as symbolic capital because they mean nothing in themselves, but depend on people believing that someone possesses these qualities’ (p. xv). Üstüner and Thompson (2012) go on to state that ‘symbolic capital is a sociological phenomenon rather than a strictly psychological one. That is, the field-specific conditions that legitimate particular forms of capital transcend the idiosyncratic judgements of a given individual’ (p. 797).

5.4.1 Theorising Symbolic Capital at Farm Level

Although the concept of symbolic capital has not been explicitly used in the discussions of family farm transfer to date, several analogous strands of research demonstrate the value of symbolic capital in the field. Burton (2004) for example, suggests that land allows expression of identity for the farm family and symbolically becomes an integral part of the farmer/farm family. Symbolic capital also comes to the fore in times of crises; driving the need to continue business operations through critical incidences, a classic example being the 2001 Foot and Mouth crises (Glover, 2011). Glover (ibid) found that a key element to business survival during these difficult periods resulted in an inherent need to maintain symbolic capital, which in turn embeds a farmers’ place in society with their unique identity remaining in place. Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital therefore provides a useful lens for exploring the human factors that influence family farm

succession and the retirement decision-making processes as it concerns ‘the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 179). The negative consequences associated with the potential loss of an older farmer’s symbolic capital due to transferring the family farm are real, but underappreciated, by policy and indeed society as a whole. In using symbolic capital as a lens through which we can explore the challenges of intergenerational family farm transfer, the following section details the way in which this plays out on the ground.

5.5 Methodology

Staying true to its geographical foundations, this research employed a multi-method triangulation design in an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the psychodynamic and sociodynamic factors that influence the process of transferring the family farm business from the perspective of the senior generation. Cohen and Manion (1986) define triangulation as an ‘attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint’ (p. 254). For the purpose of this study triangulation was assured using a collection of both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of self-administered questionnaires in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews. Approaching the research phenomenon from two different yet co-equal and interdependent methodological vantage points counteracts the limitations and biases that stem from using a single method, thus increasing the validity and reliability of findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

A detailed survey was initially undertaken with farmers in attendance at a series of ‘Transferring the Family Farm’ clinics hosted by Teagasc, (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland), to investigate the behavioural intentions and attitudes of older farmers towards succession and retirement from farming. These clinics facilitated by Teagasc, took place at 11 locations throughout the Republic of Ireland in September and October 2014, with local solicitors, accountants and other experts also in attendance for one to one meetings with attendees. These events also provided an ideal opportunity to recruit participants located throughout the Republic of Ireland for interview at the second phase of data

collection. Representatives from each of Teagasc's advisory service regional units organised and participated in these clinics (delivered free of charge) following a series of seminars and a successful pilot event in February 2014. As part of Teagasc's campaign to advertise and promote these 'Transferring the Family Farm' clinics, invitations were sent out to each of their 43,000 farming family clients to attend. This sample therefore provides an acceptable nationally representative sample of the Irish farming population across a range of diverse regions, farm sizes and operations. It is acknowledged however, that a degree of potential bias may exist in this sample towards those who are considering the idea of farm transfer.

Prior to the distribution of self-administered questionnaires at these clinics, a draft questionnaire was initially developed, pretested, and revised where necessary to strengthen reliability (Creswell, 2005). This design approach resulted in a self-administered questionnaire that communicated the desired message effectively and obtained, as far as was verifiable, reliable responses from farmers in attendance at these clinics. In addition to probing the succession and retirement intentions of older farmers, survey respondents were also asked to state the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements, measured on five-point Likert scales. Based on a review of family firm and family farm literature, these psychometric scales drew on factors that influence and hinder the succession and retirement process from the perspective of the senior generation. The statements therefore tested a number of hypotheses expressed in this paper by providing an insight into: (i) older farmers' attitudes and opinions regarding the transfer of the family farm to the next generation and (ii) their emotional connection to their farm and occupation. In addition to eliciting the personal views of farmers, the survey collected respondents' relevant socio-demographic information. Survey participants were also given the option of supplying their contact details for interview at the next stage of the research process. In terms of data analysis, questionnaire data were coded and then analysed using frequency distribution tables and a series of cross-tabulations performed in the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme.

In order to validate, deepen and build on the quantitative data gathered at the Transferring the Family Farm Clinics, the second phase of data collection consisted

of a Problem-Centred Interview approach (Witzel, 2000). Witzel (2000) explains that Problem-Centred Interviews can be combined with questionnaires in order to 'solve the problems arising in connection with samples and to relate the results generated by different procedures' (p. 3). This qualitative methodology presented a viable approach to further investigate the behavioural intentions and attitudes of older farmers towards succession and retirement from farming as it gathers objective evidence on human behaviour as well as on subjective perceptions and ways of processing social reality (Witzel, 2000). Although Problem-Centred Interviews contain open ended questions to ensure that respondents can freely and extensively produce a relatively natural dialogue, one of the key principles of this form of interview is that it is centred upon a specific social phenomenon that the interviewer keeps in mind throughout the conversation. A predetermined Problem-Centred Interview guideline therefore allows for a greater emphasis on the specific aspects of the issue that needs to be analysed, which might not be tackled in a narrative interview setting (Scheibelhofer, 2005). This methodological tool also provides a framework of orientation to ensure comparability of interviews (Witzel, 2000).

Following frequency distribution and cross-tabulation analysis of survey data obtained at the Teagasc clinics, in conjunction with an additional review of relevant literature in the field, it was possible to draw up a specific Problem-Centred Interview guideline containing pre-formulated questions on the issues that were identified to be subjectively significant to the sample farming population. Given the personal nature of the issues under investigation the use of individual face-to face interviews was deemed the most appropriate means of obtaining information from the senior generation of the farming community. All interviews were carried out in the homes of the respondents from May until August 2015. The interviews lasted up to 2.5 h and were tape recorded, transcribed in full and assigned pseudonyms to protect participant's privacy. Content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was used to analyse the data collected and identify categories and themes. Relevant quotes from the interviews were then integrated into the various themes in order to support particular findings.

5.6 Results and Discussion

The presented findings are the result of a triangulation of quantitative survey data obtained at the Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm clinics and complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews questions formulated upon an analysis of survey data and relevant literature in the field. Over 2,800 farmers attended the 11 clinics and all of the 417 farmers who were randomly selected and then approached to participate in the study agreed to complete the questionnaire, resulting in a 100% response rate. However, as older farmers are the target population of this study, only respondents aged 55 and over have been included in the analysis. The reasoning for specifically focussing on farmers aged 55 and over is that one of the terms and conditions for farmers intending to retire under the Early Retirement Scheme (ERS 3) launched in Ireland in June 2007 was that participants must have been between the ages of 55 and 66 to be eligible. Questionnaires with missing data were also eliminated from the survey to avoid biased statistical results. After both these processes, a total of 324 complete questionnaires qualified for analysis. 60% (n=194) of these respondents also gave their consent to be interviewed more indepthly. A 10% (n=19) sample of these farmers located throughout the Republic of Ireland were sourced and subsequently interviewed using a systematic sampling technique (see Table 5.1).

The overriding themes to emerge from the content analysis of the empirical research were farmers' concerns regarding potential loss of personal identity and stature and the fear of losing their positional control upon transferring their farm and retiring from farming. Problem-Centred Interviews with farmers also highlighted the divergence of opinion and uncertainty between retirement expectations and retirement realisations, resulting in the decision to retire being difficult to execute and follow through.

Pseudo Name	Gender	Age	Farming Enterprise	Regional Location	Considered Retirement
Frank	Male	57	Mixed livestock	West	Yes
Luke	Male	69	Mixed Livestock	West	Maybe
Dominic	Male	77	Mixed Livestock	West	Maybe
Rory	Male	66	Sheep	West	No
Andrew	Male	64	Beef	West	Maybe
David	Male	70	Beef	North West	Maybe
Thomas	Male	80	Sheep and Tillage	North West	Yes
Sean	Male	75	Dairy and Poultry	North East	No
Mark	Male	61	Dairy	East	No
Claire	Female	82	Mixed Livestock and Tillage	East	No
Josh	Male	70	Tillage	South East	Yes
Jack	Male	72	Dairy	South East	No
Ian	Male	67	Dairy	South	No
John	Male	70	Mixed Livestock	South	No
Colm	Male	71	Mixed Livestock	South West	No
Eimear	Female	65	Beef	South West	No
Brian	Male	85	Dairy	Midlands	Yes
Richard	Male	67	Beef	Midlands	Yes
Aoife	Female	68	Mixed Livestock	Midlands	No

Table 5.1: Interviewees' Details

Findings from the questionnaires carried out at the Teagasc clinics indicate that 33% (n=108) of the total number of respondents over the age of 55 in attendance have not considered retiring from farming in the future. 45% (n=145) stated that they have considered retiring while 21% of farmers (n=67) were uncommitted in their answer. 1 farmer did not have any opinion on the matter. As these clinics were geared towards farmers who are considering transferring their family farm, one would expect that the majority of those in attendance would be open to the idea of retirement, however as these findings illustrate, one third of respondents had not even considered it. Problem-Centred Interviews conducted with farmers shed some light on why this is the case. Interviews reveal that the farm and farming occupation completely encapsulate the lives of many farmers. 72 year old dairy farmer Jack from the South East of Ireland has no intention of retiring from farming, despite being in an official farm partnership with his son:

'Have I considered retiring? Never... I couldn't, I just couldn't! I'd be always saying I'll take it easy, but I couldn't, I have that drive to keep going like.... shur I am up every morning at half 6 and I could be going until 10 or 11 o'clock at night, so I couldn't even imagine it. I make out it wouldn't be good, because I think it's important to be active, I enjoy it like. I like to farm. But if I had to retire, it would not be for a few more years; I'm only 72 like, so definitely not for a few more years'.

Similarly, Colm, a 71 year old mixed livestock farmer from the South West of Ireland who also farms in partnership with his son refuses to even consider the thought of retirement:

'Oh god no, they'd take me out legs first... I would find it very difficult if I was told tomorrow morning, ok you can't go farming anymore. I think that would have a major effect on my life. I wouldn't even like to go down that road, I wouldn't even consider it... not being involved in farming? It is my life like!'

Interestingly, 32% of the 145 questionnaire respondents who considered retiring in the future agreed that they could not imagine what they would do if they permanently ceased all farming activity. Furthermore, 64% of these farmers also agree that the lifestyle quality from being a farmer is far greater than can be quantified by any financial incentive to leave farming. This pattern of findings is consistent with psychological research, showing that attitudes are not necessarily related to behaviours (e.g., Ajzen, 1991). Luke, a 69 year old mixed livestock farmer from the West of Ireland admitted that he had thought about retiring, but quickly dismissed the idea:

'Well I would think about it sometimes, but shur where am I going to retire to like? It's what I do and it is all I know what to do. Tis fine you could go on holidays there for a week or 10 days, my wife and I often did, but you would just be delighted to go back to the farm, back doing something

again, besides doing nothing.... It's hard to retire from farming, because you are always pottering around yanno, it is not possible to retire or leave... I couldn't possibly imagine what I would do next'.

Similarly, 57 year old part time mixed livestock farmer Frank also from the West who has two sons interested in taking over the family farm explained:

'Although I am actively thinking of retiring or in the process of it, I really won't be retiring... I don't think it would be good right now for me, I think that if I had nothing to go to it would be a sad day. I see a lot of farmers who lose themselves when they retire.... you need to have some interest in it, even if your sons have taken over you need to be there helping them and keeping active rather than just throwing in the towel. I think it is a bad idea to just walk away completely'.

These findings also mirror previous family business research by Gagnè, et al. (2011) who found that the planned retirement date of incumbents was unrelated to their attitudes toward retirement or to their concrete planning for retirement. According to Gagnè, et al. (2011) 'simply because business leaders have a date in mind for their retirement does neither mean that they perceive their retirement in a positive light nor that they concretely take steps to plan it' (p. 300). The above mentioned prominent themes of (i) loss of personal identity, (ii) changes in social stature and (iii) difficulty relinquishing control that were identified as having a significant hindering and deterring influence on the process of transferring the family farm from the perspective of the senior generation will now be discussed. The themes will be linked to relevant issues in family farm and family firm transfer literature and effectively portrayed in selected comments direct from the interviewees. Findings from the empirical research also bring forth added credence to the perception that policy is 'underestimating the importance of symbolic capital' when discussing the issue of intergenerational family farm transfer.

5.6.1 Loss of Personal Identity

Results from the empirical research indicate that the potential loss of personal identity and self-esteem brought about by transferring managerial control and retiring from the family farm business, can have a delaying if not detrimental effect on the process. Convery et al. (2005) previously observed how farmers ‘drew identity, self-esteem and well-being from their ‘day-to-day’ environment’ (p. 102). 71% of questionnaire respondents at the Teagasc clinics agree with the notion that farming is not only their job, but also their lifestyle, past time and social outlet. This all-encompassing ideology of the farming occupation is aptly explained by Aoife, a 68 year old mixed livestock farmer interviewed from the Midlands of Ireland:

‘Farming means everything. I get up in the morning to farm, I look out at the weather to see how it will affect my farming. Where I go, who I meet, who I talk to, everything is farming, it is my life, it makes me what I am..... It is my whole life, I don’t have any other interests’.

Research carried out by Rogers et al. (2013) also claim that for many farmers, their personal identity is deeply embedded in their land and occupation. Moreover, 87% of questionnaire respondents agree that the farm represents years of hard work and what they have managed to achieve over their lifetime while 68% agree that their farm and occupation have a greater symbolic importance than a financial one to them. Josh, a 70 year old tillage farmer from the South East of Ireland gives an insight into non-monetary values associated with the farm and farming profession:

‘The farm means an awful lot to me, we have been here for 12 or 13 generations, we go back to 1725, so it means a lot to me. It means a lot to me in the sense that I inherited it and I would never ever contemplate selling it... being able to farm it well and make a living out of it has given me a huge sense of satisfaction throughout my lifetime. I’ll never be a millionaire but I’ve enough money to put food on the table and to live a good life and that’s the most important thing’.

Similarly, mixed livestock farmer Colm, from the South West explains:

'I would like to be able to keep farming for as long as I can because I get so much enjoyment and pride out of doing it and as I've said umpteen times before, it's not about the money, the money is secondary'.

These findings also reinforce previous research by Ingram and Kirwan (2011) who maintain that 'older farmers are clearly attached to their farms, having put a lot of effort and investment over the years into building up the business' (p. 295). While Rogers et al. (2013) argued that identity issues which influence farm management decisions cannot be explained by economics alone.

The notion of identity and the concept of symbolic capital, are closely connected (Swartz, 2013). According to Swartz (ibid), 'without symbolic capital, there is no identity since identity must emerge from insignificance and this can come only through successful elicitation of recognition from others' (p. 105). As the incumbent's identity is often intensely intertwined with their farm or firm (Kets de Vries, 1985 Rogers et al. 2013), they may use their professional title as a 'distinctive mark' (Bourdieu, 1985) to identify themselves to others in their struggle for legitimacy and recognition in a field (Borthwick et al. 2015); i.e. 'I am a CEO' or 'I am a farmer'. Such an honorary position as head of the farm or firm is endowed with symbolic capital leading others to acknowledge their status (Bourdieu, 1985). 78% of questionnaire respondents agree with the notion that being a farmer gives them a sense of belonging and a position in society. Problem-Centred Interviews conducted with farmers discovered that the majority of interviewees felt that being identified as farmer is vitally important to their sense of self-esteem and self-worth in the farming community and the wider social world. For example, Mark, a 61 year old Dairy farmer from the East of Ireland explains that:

'Farming isn't just my job; it's a way of life for me. I am known far and wide as a farmer at this stage', I am not known as anything else. In fact, I wouldn't wish to be known or identified as anything else! I am proud to be a farmer and I would like to think that being a farmer defines who I am'.

These findings also reinforce Lansberg's (1988) argument that the family business can define an incumbent's position in their local community and society. As symbolic capital is perceptual, something that we, or others, feel that we are (Joppke, 1986), the potential dismissal of a lifelong title and position upon transferring the family farm to the younger generation may cause 'loss of face' within the family and community, thus, decreasing symbolic capital, and consequently leading older framers to resist the succession and retirement process. According to Formosa (2007), 'retirement forces older persons to an arena of role ambiguity' and 'strips them of their social worth in society' (p. 11) thus diminishing their life-long accumulation of symbolic capital. Indeed, Formosa, (ibid) believes that once retirement age is reached, one's position in society is altered and a retiree's 'social space' changes from that of 'achievement' to one of 'ascription'. Previous identities and statuses associated with one's occupational position are erased and become meaningless (ibid). In response to the questionnaire's inquiry concerning this issue, 72% of respondents who had not contemplated retiring from farming in the future agreed with the suggestion that relinquishing control and retiring from farming would damage their identity and self-esteem. A number of farmers interviewed believed that they would be seen or perceived differently by others as a 'retired farmer' and therefore struggled to come to terms with the prospect of doing so. Ian, a 67 year old dairy farmer from the South of Ireland recalled how another farmer's experience of an identity crisis upon retiring from farming has warned him away from the process:

'I can remember speaking to some fella a number of years back and he said that when he sold his farm and gave up farming that he was almost a non-identity afterwards, he wasn't a farmer anymore, he wasn't anything..... He said that afterwards he never felt that he could go to farming meetings anymore because all his life he had been a farmer and next thing he wasn't and ya know that story made a major impression on me and has even influenced my own decisions to keep going and not retire ever since'.

These findings again endorse Lansberg's (1988) hypotheses that an incumbent may withstand succession planning 'out of fear of losing an important part of their

identity' (p. 124). Kets de Vries, (2003) also argue that 'the threat of going from somebody to nobody overnight, of being a nonentity experiencing nothingness, generates an enormous amount of anxiety (p. 711).

5.6.2 Changes in Social Stature

In relation to loss of status, findings from the questionnaire also indicate that negative connotations associated with the idea of succession and retirement, especially at a time when the older generation seek purpose in life and feel needed, respected and valued as they age (Rogers et al., 2013) can become part of an older farmer's indoctrination, thus derailing the process. 87% of farmers surveyed, agree that 'the concept of retirement is not popular or well-regarded within the farming community', a situation unchanged from research carried out in the Republic of Ireland in the 1970s (Commins and Kelleher 1973; Commins, 1973). Following discussions with farmers on this issue, it became strikingly apparent that there seems to be a cultural expectation within the farming community that 'farmers don't retire'. Those who do retire are generally perceived by interviewees to have a defeatist attitude or else seen to have no option but to do so due to ill health. For example, mixed livestock farmer Colm, from the South West explains that:

'Farmer's don't retire. I'd say the only reason a farmer would retire is because of circumstances in their personal lives or their health... Then again there may be odd people out there who just like to retire and walk away from farming but they would be very much in the minority, I would imagine. I just think it would be seen as defeatist to retire.'

Similarly, mixed livestock farmer Luke from the West claims that:

'Tis not popular, fellas always talk about retiring, fellas always say I am waiting for the day to retire, but they don't retire, do you see any of them retiring, I don't think so! I cannot see them retiring! It would be seen as having a lazy or defeatist attitude, definitely.'

These findings are reflective of western society's failure to support incumbents who plan their succession and retirement from the family business (Lansberg, 1988; Kets de Vries, 2003). According to Lansberg (1988) 'the stereotypes that we carry are of legendary leaders who have 'died in the saddle' or 'gone down with the ship,' not of leaders who have thoughtfully planned their exit' (p. 130). Therefore, planning for succession is perceived as a 'sign of weakness or as a deficiency of character', (Lansberg, 1988, p. 131) thus discouraging the incumbent to consider it. Lansberg (1988) found that even an incumbent who has plucked up the courage to fabricate a succession plan for their family business, 'often find themselves disoriented after their plan is made public' (p. 125). From a family farming perspective, Pitts et al. (2009) also observe that surrendering managerial control and ownership of the farm may 'reduce the status they have acquired in the community derived from being the primary operator' (p. 61), a position confirmed by 64% of questionnaire respondents who have not considered retiring from farming in the future. Numerous interviewees commented that they would feel isolated and separated from the rest of the farming community if they were to retire from farming. For example, 70 year old beef farmer David from the North West of Ireland explained that:

'If you give up farming you are gone, I mean you wouldn't be involved anymore. I think other farmers wouldn't take a bit of notice of me if I retired and I'd imagine that they wouldn't have any interest in the world trying to talk to me about farming either because it would not be worth their while to do so anymore. I would be very conscious of that'.

Bourdieu (1990) explains that 'struggles for recognition are a fundamental dimension of social life' (p. 22) and highlights the importance of symbolic capital in an individual's social status. He argues that social life, and therefore business activity, may be conceived as a multi-dimensional status game (within which there are struggles for power); whereby individuals draw on three different types of resources (economic, cultural, and social capital) to compete for status (symbolic capital) (Holt, 1998). Over a farmer's lifetime of farming endeavours, they accumulate a significant level of status-conferring symbolic capital in the farming community (Glover, 2010). An underlying principle of the notion of symbolic capital implies that individuals derive their existence by living through others point

of view; they become entangled in a web of total dependence on how others perceive them and how others define who they really are. This was evident within the survey results at the Teagasc Clinics with 71% of farmers agreeing that to maintain their status in the farming community it was hugely important that they were still viewed as a skilled, productive farmer amongst their peers. Regardless of their age, each farmer interviewed emphasised the essential role that they continue to have in the day-to-day operation of the farm. The majority of interviewees also plan to use their experience and skill to compensate for decreases in physical strength inevitable with age. For example, tillage farmer Josh from the South East explained that he will continue to play a key role in the farm even when he is no longer physically able to provide manual labour:

'Generally speaking I would say that while you can do hands on farming, which I've done for the past 40 years or 50 years, keep doing it and when you are unable to do so you can always have an input from a management perspective and from an experience perspective.... That way you can still have an influence and play a productive role in the farm'.

Similarly, part time mixed livestock farmer Frank from the West would like to remain active and productive on the farm even upon transferring over the farm to the next generation:

'Even if the boys take everything over in the morning, I would still like to remain active and productive on the farm. Maybe not as much as I used to but I would still like to get out there on the farm and do some work.... Not necessarily for monetary gain but to be active in yourself, because if you had nothing to get up out of bed for in the morning, it's a sad day'.

Rossier (2012) previously pointed out that 'decades of hard work have left their mark on those who farm for a living' (p. 90) and therefore keeping up activities on the farm in old age and remaining embedded in the farming community serves to create meaning, value and purpose in their lives (ibid). As the accumulation of

symbolic capital necessitates ‘considerable labour and time devoted to making and maintaining relations and to material and symbolic investments’ (Fuchs, 2003, p. 392) a major complicating factor for older farmers faced with the prospect of transferring the family farm, relinquishing control and retiring, may therefore be the fear that their lifetime accrual of symbolic capital practically evaporates overnight, leading to a sense of insignificance and a lack of purpose. Burton (2004) and Burton et al. (2008) refer to a number of studies showing that farmers resist change that requires giving up their socio-cultural status acquired through productivist agricultural roles. Family business literature points out that ‘many leaders need the admiration of their subordinates to feel truly alive. They crave an endless supply of narcissistic stimuli’ and the ‘prospect of climbing down off the top of the heap and becoming a nobody holds little attraction for them’ (Kets de Vries, 2003, p. 708).

5.6.3 Difficulty Relinquishing Control

In addition to an anticipated loss of identity and status, results from the empirical research indicate that the senior generation of farmers may resist succession and retirement planning as a means of sustaining their positional dominance as head of the family farm. Surprisingly, 71% of respondents who had not considered retiring from farming in the future have in fact identified a potential successor to their farm somewhat contradicting the fact that 60% of these very farmers felt that the younger generation had the required experience, knowledge and skills to take over from them. Problem-Centred Interviews identified that the idea of relinquishing control of the farm was not popular amongst many participants, in fact some went so far as to say that they would experience great difficulty in doing so, even if it was to their own children (see Barclay et al. 2012; Price and Conn, 2012; Whitehead et al., 2012). For example, mixed livestock farmer Aoife from the Midlands of Ireland, who is in an unofficial farm partnership with her son, explains:

‘No I won’t retire, because if I did I think I would literally go to the coffin, I would go to the graveyard. What I am saying is I wouldn’t have any interest in anything else. My days are defined by farming.... Because that’s what I am,

that's who I am, that's what I do.... There is no way I would give up what I have, not even to the next generation, no..... It would be inevitable if I had to do it, I mean it wouldn't come naturally, it would be something that would be put upon me, it would be sickness or something, it would have to be a life changing ordeal or something or another'

Similarly, beef farmer David from the North West has great difficulty transferring over the family farm to his son:

'I have a son who is 30 this year and he wants to settle down and farm here and I suppose in a sensible ideal world I should transfer over the farm to him and my wife and I should buy a house in the local village or somewhere else and let him move in here. Well that would be in a sensible world, but I wouldn't even consider or suggest that. I am certainly not prepared to let go of what I have just yet'.

The concept of symbolic capital is critical to our understanding of how patterns of power and domination are reproduced in family farms and family firms. Crucially, symbolic capital forms a kind of institutionally organized and, to some extent, guaranteed source of recognition and prestige that incorporates power as an inherent feature of one's social position within a social arena (field) (Bourdieu, 1977). An incumbent's formidable store of symbolic capital derived from being the primary operator of the business is thus an important aspect of their life as it defines their position and reputation within their family and indeed in society. Price and Conn (2012) also highlight that being the 'boss farmer' provides a certain status in a rural location. Therefore, the potential depletion of symbolic capital that may occur as a result of handing over full responsibility of the farm to the next generation and retiring may be difficult to absorb for many older farmers, because not only do they revel in the recognition, belief, esteem and confidence of others afforded to them via the possession of symbolic capital, but also the ability and power to impose their vision on the farm. Results from the research identify that 60% of farmers who have not considered retiring from farming agree with the suggestion that they would no longer be seen as having a leading role in their household and local community if

they relinquished control and retired. Problem-Centred Interviews confirmed that such a prospect places significant emotional stress on many participants. Tillage farmer Josh from the South East explains:

'Well I think history would tend to prove that that is the case. I know a lot of cases where farmers have hung on and not transferred over but the minute they handed it over then their relationship and role suddenly changed within the family and that is a danger. Retirement changes the relationship with other farmers too, it certainly does and that is also a worrying factor'.

These findings again confirm the premise put forward by Lansberg (1988), that the fear of losing authority and governance of the firm by passing on the reins to the next generation is exacerbated by the perception that 'retiring from the firm will lead to a demotion from one's central role within the family' (p. 124). Similarly, from a family farming perspective, Pitts et al. (2009) previously pointed out that the 'senior generation might be reluctant to engage in succession planning, as surrendering control of the farm relegates them to a more peripheral role' (p. 61) and therefore, inevitably their ability and power to control and shape the events around them.

5.7 Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of the complex and competing emotions currently derailing and deterring intergenerational family farm transfer. As the average age of the farming population is increasing worldwide, this investigation comes in a very timely manner. This research makes an exciting contribution by unpacking the relevance of applying family firm literature when investigating the psychodynamic and sociodynamic factors that influence the process of transferring the family farm business from the perspective of the senior generation. An abundance of family business literature exists on the resistance towards the process from the perspective of the incumbent, whereas its counterpart from a family farming perspective is largely absent. Connecting these previously

disparate literatures, allowed us insight into the views of elderly farmers, their concerns, fears, needs and future plans. In advancing the theoretical construct, this paper identified the value of Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital in comprehending the human factors governing the behaviour patterns and attitudes of elderly farmers facing succession and retirement. Using this concept, with associated characteristics of honour, prestige, position and status, contributes to a more discerning picture of the role emotional ties to the farm and farming occupation play on the decision-making process of the older farmer.

The prominent themes that emerged from the triangulation of empirical data, provide an appreciation of the complex nature of succession and retirement, while also reinforcing the condition that policy is 'underestimating the importance of symbolic capital' when discussing the issue of intergenerational family farm transfer. Transferring the family farm returns little symbolic capital to older farmers. Many farmers' identity and self-esteem are strongly attributed to their occupation and as a result sacrificing one's professional and personal identity upon transferring managerial control of the farm and retiring is a concept that they find difficult to accept. Our research finds that farmers resist transferring the farm on the basis of an anticipated loss of the recognition and social status that has accompanied their position as an active and productive farmer in society. Subsequently the senior generation resist succession and retirement planning as a means of sustaining their position as head of the family farm. As an older farmer's symbolic capital appears to be founded not only on their past achievements but also on present production, the thought of being 'retired' is found to be particularly arduous for them. Consequently, even the most sophisticated of family farm transfer plans are of little avail if policy makers and practitioners are not adequately cognizant and understanding of 'the language of farming' (Burton, 2004, p. 212) and how painful it is for the older generation of farmers to 'let go'.

Empirical findings brought focus on the suitability of farm transfer policy strategies such as Early Retirement Schemes put in place in the Republic of Ireland over the past four decades. These schemes, we argue, had little or no regard for older farmer's emotions and were excessively preoccupied with financial incentives to encourage the process. While such economic efforts to confront the issue are important and indeed have been in many aspects well meaning, empirical findings

here have identified many more facets to the farm transfer decision-making process, which in large part have been neglected. The outcome; a derailment of the process in many cases. For example, the eligibility requirements for farmers entering the most recent Early Retirement Scheme for farmers (ERS 3, June, 2007), was that ‘Persons intending to retire under the Scheme shall cease agricultural activity forever’. Essentially, farmers were being asked to revise their self-perceptions upon retirement. This largely unsuccessful scheme (it was suspended in October, 2008) was completely oblivious to the mind-set of many farmers as exemplified here. Being recognised as an active and productive farmer in society has been acknowledged as being central to a farmer’s sense of self. As symbolic capital is situational, the symbolic capital assigned to a person in one situation may not necessarily carry over into other situations. Thus the prospect of going from being an active and productive farmer to permanently ceasing all farming activity upon retirement as demanded in this retirement scheme, forces older farmers to face a number of what could be termed, painful realities. Realities that come with the consciousness of letting go of one’s professional identity, becoming a retiree and becoming more and more dependent on others. The resultant outcome leads farmers, in many cases to resist the process.

In an era of unprecedented transition in global agriculture, we acknowledge that the global phenomenon of an ageing farming population calls for and justifies the development of various incentives to stimulate and entice family farm transfer. This will enable enthusiastic young farmers gain access to productive assets and subsequently improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector. One such policy is the farm partnership model, where two or more partners operate their enterprises jointly. This model can be seen as a stepping stone to farm transfer, however, similar to the sporadic uptake of previous Early Retirement Schemes, the low number of farm partnerships currently in operation in the Republic of Ireland indicates that policies and supports need to be amended in order to encourage greater participation. In an attempt to spur on the process, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine launched a collaborative farming scheme in 2015, funded under Ireland’s Rural Development Programme and co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), to ‘encourage the establishment of new farm partnership arrangements by contributing to the legal,

advisory and financial services costs incurred by farmers in the drawing up of their farm partnership agreement' (DAFM, 2015b). While this is still very new, what is interesting here however is that this scheme has again a simplified view of the factors influencing the process and fails to deal with the complex emotional dynamics facing ageing farmers identified in this research. Findings of this study illustrate that in many cases, the older generation, through their own admission, prioritize the building and maintenance of their personal possession of symbolic capital rather than transferring the family farm and retiring. Therefore we argue that any new initiatives put in place to support and encourage intergenerational family farm transfer should not be conceived so narrowly as to ignore possible social consequences or wider issues of human dignity. Both social and economic needs must be catered to, and ideally a policy for structural reform in agriculture must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of interventions to deal with the personal and social loss an older farmer may experience upon transferring the family farm.

In order to do this, we advocate that future policies and programmes relating to family farm transfer take into account the pervasiveness of symbolic capital and work within this structure to effect change. For example, on its own, and with the numerous perceived negative connotations associated with it identified, we suggest that the term 'Early Retirement Scheme' is no longer appropriate for policy to use in a farming context. Perhaps the term 'Farm Progression Scheme' would be more effective as it portrays a sense of purposefulness rather than one of cessation to an elderly farmer. In addition, instead of reporting that farm management decisions are in the hands of a generation who may be more resistant to structural change and growth, policy makers and key stakeholders need to embrace, publicly promote and recognise the older generation's invaluable store of knowledge, skills and years of experience working on the farm that the younger generation have not yet accumulated. The feeling of still being valued and needed in society may reinforce the older farmers' morale and sense of purpose in the face of the gradual diminishment of their physical capacities. This may help to diminish the stigma and defeatist stereotype associated with transferring the family farm and subsequently promote a more positive and wilful attitude towards the process over time. The development of such strategies concerning the human dynamics of family farm transfer has the potential to greatly ease the stresses of the process. Anyone who

considers such recommendations to be too idealistic, should remember that we all inevitably have to face the prospect of letting go of our professional tasks and ties in our old age. No one can avoid ageing and as this research has identified, most elderly farmers opt to maintain the facade of normal day to day activity and behaviour instead of retiring. As such, this paper, in attempting to understand the world as farmers perceive it, can be drawn upon to inform future policy directions and as a consequence prevent older farmers from being isolated and excluded from society almost by accident rather than intention. This research is but a start however and the insights given and issues raised will hopefully stimulate further investigations along these lines. In future work, it would be valuable to further explore the power dynamics within family farm households identified in this research. As the older farmer often has accumulated a great deal of symbolic capital throughout their lifetime, a question that warrants additional investigation is the degree to which they exploit their symbolic power as head of the household and farm in their struggle with the younger generation for control and ownership of the family farm.

Chapter 6

Article 2

Chapter 6

Article 2: Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2017) Uncovering obstacles: The exercise of symbolic power in the complex arena of intergenerational family farm transfer, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 54, 60-75.

Journal of Rural Studies 54 (2017) 60–75



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Rural Studies

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud



Uncovering obstacles: The exercise of symbolic power in the complex arena of intergenerational family farm transfer



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 16 February 2017
Received in revised form
13 April 2017
Accepted 13 June 2017

Keywords:
Family farming
Succession
Symbolic power
Symbolic violence
Farm viability

ABSTRACT

The older generation's reluctance to 'step aside' and retire to facilitate young farmers who want to establish a career in farming is a globally recognized feature of intergenerational family farm transfer. This is despite the array of financial enticements encouraging the process. Recent research carried out in the Republic of Ireland reveals that the prospect of such a transition places significant emotional stress on older farmers, leading many to abstain from retirement. Applying Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic power and violence as a theoretical framework, this paper presents a detailed analysis of the manner in which the older generation galvanize and sustain their managerial control and dominance as head of the family farm. This research employs a multi-method triangulation design, consisting of self-administered questionnaires in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews, to reveal the actions that have a hindering and deterring influence on the process. The prominent strategies of symbolic violence to emerge from the empirical data were the senior generation's efforts to reiterate their indispensability to the daily management and operation of the farm, the imposition of a mind-set of the disastrous consequences retirement would bring and unilateral acts of generosity. Additionally, farmers are found to hold contradictory and conflicting desires about farm transfer; even those who are in the process of or have already planned for succession resist 'fading into the background' and instead move to reassert their authority over the family farm. The paper concludes by suggesting that policy and professionals dealing with farm families must be cognisant of the pervasiveness of power relations embedded in the mentality of everyday farm life when facilitating discussions between old and young family members' objectives, goals and expectations for the farm.

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1. Introduction

The family farm is an enduring symbol of rurality, with many farmers able to trace their family's history back 'three generations or more' (Lobley and Baker, 2012, p.11). Maintaining family farm control and ownership is therefore central to many farm households (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Mishra and El-Osta, 2008; Glover, 2010), resulting in a deeply ingrained 'rural ideology' that prioritizes the process of handing over the farm within the family (Barclay et al., 2005; Lobley et al., 2010; Gill, 2013; Nuthall and Old, 2017). Furthermore, a longing to 'keep the name on the land' (Potter and Lobley, 1992; Price and Conn, 2012) has focused a 'clear recognition of the cyclical nature of inheritance and farming' (Gill,

2013, p.85). Farmers have their farms because of the actions of their ancestors; therefore believing in their responsibility to pass on what they inherited (ibid). Indeed, Potter and Lobley (1996) consider farming to be 'the most hereditary of professions' (P.286). Drawing on family farm transfer literature from the Republic of Ireland and further afield (Kimhi and Lopez, 1999; Foskey, 2005; Bika, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Barclay et al., 2012; Conway et al., 2016; Nuthall and Old, 2017), it is clear that in spite of the deep-rooted desire to keep the farm in the family however, there is considerable reluctance amongst the older generation towards relinquishing managerial duties and ownership to the next generation. Consequently, a significant proportion of farmers abstain from transferring the farm while alive; resulting in significant economic and sociocultural barriers for the younger generation interested in pursuing a career in farming. The lack of correspondence between the senior generation's readiness to step aside and the younger generation's inclination to take over, is also

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Figure 6.1: Article 2 cover page

6.1 Abstract

The older generation's reluctance to 'step aside' and retire to facilitate young farmers who want to establish a career in farming is a globally recognized feature of intergenerational family farm transfer. This is despite the array of financial enticements encouraging the process. Recent research carried out in the Republic of Ireland reveals that the prospect of such a transition places significant emotional stress on older farmers, leading many to abstain from retirement. Applying Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic power and violence as a theoretical framework, this paper presents a detailed analysis of the manner in which the older generation galvanize and sustain their managerial control and dominance as head of the family farm. This research employs a multi-method triangulation design, consisting of self-administered questionnaires in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews, to reveal the actions that have a hindering and deterring influence on the process. The prominent strategies of symbolic violence to emerge from the empirical data were the senior generation's efforts to reiterate their indispensability to the daily management and operation of the farm, the imposition of a mind-set of the disastrous consequences retirement would bring and unilateral acts of generosity. Additionally, farmers are found to hold contradictory and conflicting desires about farm transfer; even those who are in the process of or have already planned for succession resist 'fading into the background' and instead move to reassert their authority over the family farm. The paper concludes by suggesting that policy and professionals dealing with farm families must be cognisant of the pervasiveness of power relations embedded in the mentality of everyday farm life when facilitating discussions between old and young family members' objectives, goals and expectations for the farm.

Keywords

Family Farming, Succession, Symbolic Power, Symbolic Violence, Farm Viability

6.2 Introduction

The family farm is an enduring symbol of rurality, with many farmers able to trace their family's history back 'three generations or more' (Lobley and Baker, 2012, p. 11). Maintaining family farm control and ownership is therefore central to many farm households (Gasson and Errington 1993; Mishra and El-Osta, 2008; Glover 2010), resulting in a deeply ingrained 'rural ideology' that prioritizes the process of handing over the farm within the family (Barclay et al., 2005; Lobley et al., 2010; Gill 2013; Nuthall and Old, 2017). Furthermore, a longing to 'keep the name on the land' (Potter and Lobley, 1992; Price and Conn, 2012) has focused a 'clear recognition of the cyclical nature of inheritance and farming' (Gill, 2013, p. 85). Farmers have their farms because of the actions of their ancestors; therefore believing in their responsibility to pass on what they inherited (ibid). Indeed, Potter and Lobley (1996) consider farming to be 'the most hereditary of professions' (p. 286). Drawing on family farm transfer literature from the Republic of Ireland and further afield (Kimhi and Lopez, 1999; Foskey, 2005; Bika, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Barclay et al., 2012; Conway et al., 2016; Nuthall and Old, 2017), it is clear that in spite of the deep-rooted desire to keep the farm in the family however, there is considerable reluctance amongst the older generation towards relinquishing managerial duties and ownership to the next generation. Consequently, a significant proportion of farmers abstain from transferring the farm while alive, resulting in significant economic and sociocultural barriers for the younger generation interested in pursuing a career in farming. The lack of correspondence between the senior generation's readiness to step aside and the younger generation's inclination to take over, is also seen as one of the reasons why the farming community consists of a farm population with a high age profile (Mishra and El-Osta, 2007; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015).

Considerable research is dedicated towards trying to understand this fraught and complex conundrum, and how such issues can be prevented or resolved. Conway et al. (2016) identified the value of applying Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital in comprehending the human factors governing the behaviour patterns and attitudes of elderly farmers facing the 'twin processes' of succession and retirement. Using

this concept, with associated characteristics of honour, prestige, position and status, it highlights that the decision-making process of the older farmer does not always adhere to the economic school of thought, owing to emotional ties to the farm and farming occupation. As the senior generation's symbolic capital appears to be 'founded not only on their past achievements but also on present production' (Conway et al., 2016, p. 174), the potential loss of 'esteem, recognition, belief, credit and confidence of others' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 166), that may occur as a result of handing over responsibility of the farm to the next generation was discovered to be 'difficult to absorb for many older farmers' (Conway et al., 2016, p. 173). The older generation were also found to resist the process because they revel in the socially recognized and approved authority attached to their hierarchical position as the 'boss farmer', from which symbolic power can be legitimately exercised (Swartz, 2013) and therefore, inevitably their ability to control and shape the events around them (Conway et al., 2016).

As such power has potentially repressive elements, this paper builds on a preliminary hypothesis made by Conway et al. (2016) that it may be the case that older farmers 'exploit their symbolic power as head of the household and farm', in an effort to galvanize and sustain his or her managerial control and ownership of the family farm (p. 175). This research is particularly concerned with the way such power is exercised against the younger generation and reflects on whether it can be characterized as involving what Bourdieu refers to as symbolic violence. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, to put it as simply as possible, is a non-physical mode of dominance, in which the ideas and values of a ruling cultural class (i.e. the older generation in this case) are imposed (often through subconscious means) onto the thoughts and perceptions of a dominated social group (i.e. the younger generation) in a covert manner to maintain and perpetuate structures of inequality and marginalization in the existing social order/societal hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1991; Colaguori, 2010; Anderson, 2013; Udasmoro, 2013). Bourdieu defines symbolic violence as 'soft' violence (Moi, 1991, p. 1023), or as 'censored, euphemized, i.e., unrecognizable, socially recognized violence' (Bourdieu 1977, p. 191). The invisible nature of symbolic violence as a mode of legitimate domination (Morgan and Björkert, 2006; Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016) has the potential to generate precarious, and often unintended, consequences that can displace the

ambitions and long-term objectives of the younger generation by removing their agency and voice (Montesanti and Thurston, 2015; Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016).

In the Republic of Ireland, agricultural policy has explored various methods of financially stimulating and enticing intergenerational farm transfer over the past four decades, albeit very little change in attitude amongst the older generation towards the process has come about to date (Commins and Kelleher 1973; Gillmor, 1999; Bika, 2007; Conway et al., 2016; Leonard et al., 2017). Conway et al. (2016) argue that while policy measures to alleviate concerns of an ageing farming population and improve competitiveness of the agricultural sector are important, they are excessively preoccupied with economic enticements and have ‘little or no regard’ for the older farmer’s emotional welfare (p. 166). In particular, Conway et al. (2016) strongly criticised the eligibility requirements for farmers entering the most recent largely unsuccessful Early Retirement Scheme for farmers (ERS 3, June, 2007), which included ‘Persons intending to retire under the scheme shall cease agricultural activity forever’ (DAFM, 2007), arguing that this scheme was completely oblivious to the psyche of many older farmers. The thought of becoming a ‘retiree’ was identified as being particularly arduous for farmers who wish to remain ‘recognised as an active and productive farmer in society’, as it is seen to be central to their sense of self (Conway et al., 2016, p. 174). In a similar way, Kirkpatrick’s (2013) study in the USA also argued that ‘in many cases the older farmer's sense of place and purpose attached to the family farm’ supersedes any fiscal incentives that encourages ‘the handing over of the family farm to the next generation’ (p. 4).

The limited uptake and marginal success of previous Early Retirement Schemes in the Republic of Ireland, in addition to the fact that entry into the agricultural sector is almost entirely by inheritance or purchasing highly inflated value farmland (Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Conway et al., 2016; Leonard et al., 2017), indicates that existing and future policies and schemes designed to incentivize and stimulate intergenerational farm transfer, such as farm partnerships, need to be rectified to encourage increased uptake and participation. Before confronting such issues however, it is first essential to expose the defence mechanisms and tactics employed by the older generation to avoid and deter the process from occurring, as these individuals ultimately have the power to decide whether the transition takes

place or not, due to their substantial, lifelong cache of symbolic capital (Conway et al., 2016). This study explores this anomaly through the analytical lens of Bourdieu's conceptual triumvirate of symbolic capital, power, and the exercise of symbolic violence. Moi (1991) highlight how 'the powerful possessors of symbolic capital become the wielders of symbolic power, and thus of symbolic violence' (p. 1022), enabling them to impose meanings as legitimate while concealing the arbitrary power relations that are the basis of its force (Bourdieu, 1977).

To investigate this further, family firm literature pertaining to the manner in which the senior family business leader and owner, hereafter referred to as the incumbent, galvanize his or her controlling position and dominance as head of the firm (e.g. Lansberg, 1988; Handler, 1994; Sharma et al., 2001; Kets de Vries, 2003; Palliam et al., 2011) will be drawn on. Family business research suggests that the responsibility for directing succession planning lies heavily on the support of the incumbent (Christensen, 1953; Kelly et al. 2000), who appears to have 'the power to shape the succession process for better or ill' (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 31). This paper, in particular, draws on Lansberg's (1988) theoretical hypotheses of resistance toward succession planning in the family business from the perspective of the incumbent. According to Lansberg's theory, resistance or at best ambivalence to the succession process can be explained by the understanding that succession decisions tend to be emotionally loaded. In many cases the older generation experience difficulties actively engaging in or mobilising the process and as a result often exert strong pressures to avoid the emotion-laden issues of transferring the family business to the next generation (ibid). There is however a lack of in-depth research that investigates these issues in relation to the family farm business, resulting in a knowledge void of the micro-politics and hierarchical power dynamics at play within family farm households.

The sheer number of family farms, their aggregate impact on the agri-food industry, and the potential economic and social losses that may occur as a consequence of the senior generation's widely reported unwillingness to engage in intergenerational family farm transfer (Foskey, 2005; Bika, 2007; Loblely et al., 2010; Conway et al., 2016), befit us to delve deeper into the mind-set and mannerism of older farmers. Drawing on two previously disparate literature (transferring the family firm and family farm) and applying Bourdieu's perspective on power as a theoretical

framework, this paper presents an insightful, nuanced analysis of the way in which the older generation adjourn, defer and even deter succession planning. Moreover, by providing an in-depth insight into the hidden ‘workings’ of symbolic violence through analysis and real-life examples, this paper conceptualizes and makes visible a veiled form of everyday domination within farm households. An in-depth understanding of the factors that impact on farm succession is paramount as it will aid in the construction and delivery of effective policies and interventions that help unshackle the deep-seated resistance towards intergenerational farm transfer, whilst ensuring that the older generation retain a sense of purpose and continue to feel needed and valued (Rogers et al. 2013; Conway et al., 2016). These ideas are aimed at policy makers and key stakeholders who have the means and ability to bring about such change. The next section reviews the family firm and family farm transfer literature; followed by an outline of the theoretical framework adopted and a summary of the methodology that underpinned the study. Research findings are then discussed with the latter part of the paper drawing some exploratory conclusions in terms of their relevance to those who are developing future policies and programmes for older farmers and their families.

6.3 Transferring the Family Firm and Family Farm Literature Review

6.3.1 Ambivalence Towards Succession

Succession in family owned businesses is an explicit process by which management control and ownership of the firm is transferred from one generation to the next (Sharma et al., 2003; Palliam et al., 2011; Boyd et al., 2014). The process is seen as the ‘mirror image’ of retirement; as the younger generation takes over, the senior generation withdraw (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Uchiyama et al., 2008; Loble, 2010; Lange et al., 2011). The terms ‘succession’ and ‘retirement’ will thus be used interchangeably throughout this paper. Succession is reported to be the preeminent test of success for the family business (Brockhaus, 2004; Glover, 2011), with considerable practical implications for the continuity and survival of the firm within family networks (Christensen, 1953; Handler, 1990; Handler, 1994; Palliam et al., 2011). Similarly, from a family farm perspective, intergenerational succession is instrumental in ensuring the sustained viability of individual family farms (Weiss,

1999; Wheeler et al., 2012), in addition to shaping the future structure of rural communities and the broader agri-food sector (Pesquin et al. 1999; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007; Gill, 2013).

For succession in the family business to materialize, there must be three fundamental components: an incumbent, who hands over the leadership role of the business; a successor, who takes over; and a mechanism by which the transition process takes place (Sharma et al., 2001). Additionally, succession is not an event that occurs at one point in time, but rather, is an ongoing process that allows for a fair and gradual transfer of managerial duties and assets of the family business to the next generation (Steier and Miller, 2010; Lange et al., 2011; Boyd et al., 2014). Family firm literature highlights that managing this three-pronged process is a challenging task however, that invariably inflicts a variety of extensive changes simultaneously on the family business (Lansberg, 1988; Handler 1992; Sharma et al. 2001). According to Lansberg (1988) ‘family relationships need to be realigned, traditional patterns of influence are redistributed, and long-standing management and ownership structures must give way to new structures’ (p. 121). These monumental adjustments in the roles, structure, organizational goals, governance and culture of the existing business tend to be anxiety provoking and conjure the necessity to find answers and solutions to the many uncertainties surrounding the future needs of both the enterprise and the family involved (Lansberg, 1988; Palliam et al., 2011; Steier and Miller, 2010). Family farm literature also reports succession to be a period of significant turmoil, both financially and emotionally, for farm households (Keating and Munro, 1989; McGonigal, 1991; Burton and Walford, 2005; Gill, 2013).

It is widely reported that a well thought out and effectively executed succession plan is essential for the continuity and prosperity of a family business through to the next generation, regardless of its size and structure (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001; Dyer, 2003; Poutziouris et al., 2006; Palliam et al., 2011; Saan et al., 2013). In fact, Murphy (2005) contends that dealing effectively with succession planning is the single most lasting gift that one generation can bestow on the next. Palliam et al. (2011) claim that there can be ‘mutual benefits’ to both the older and younger generation through a carefully developed and structured succession plan, which ‘reinforces the opportunities for both parties to achieve their goals with

respect to career advancement and retirement’ (p. 27). Planning effectively for succession is an integral part of managing a family farm business (Mishra and El-Osta, 2008; Gill, 2013), with Nuthall and Old (2017) suggesting that the process will ‘ensure the farm is efficiently managed using new management with the assets not only being retained but also organised so that the extended family is content with what transpires’ (p. 40). If succession planning is avoided however, it is irrefutable that the unexpected departure of the business incumbent (in an event such as serious illness or death) can cause a large-scale upheaval in the existing pattern of ownership and authority, subsequently precipitating conflict among heirs. Given the intense pressures that arise under such critical incidences, there may not be sufficient time for the family involved to make the critical and strategic decisions required to ensure the future of the business without a succession plan already in place, leading to a distressed sale of the business in some cases to settle family disputes (Christensen, 1953; Lansberg, 1988; Kenyon-Rouvinez and Ward, 2005; Palliam et al., 2011).

Unsatisfactory succession planning can also lead to a range of destructible outcomes from a family farming perspective, including, at the extreme, ‘the farm being removed from the particular family’s ownership and/or acrimonious family relationships’ (Nuthall and Old, 2017, p. 40). Furthermore, Goeller (2012) warns that ‘without thoughtful planning for succession, the unintended consequence is that there are fewer and fewer young farmers entering the business and ownership of land becomes concentrated into fewer and older hands’ (p. 150). In fact, demographic trends throughout the world reveal an inversion of the age pyramid with those aged 65 years and over constituting the fastest growing sector of the farming community (European Commission, 2013; European Commission, 2015; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015; Leonard et al., 2017). Furthermore, Eurostat's most recent Farm Structure Survey highlights that for every young farmer in Europe, there are 9 elderly farmers (European Commission, 2015). This ‘greying’ of the farming workforce is reported to have major implications for government policy (Rogers et al., 2013), raising concerns about the economic, social and environmental sustainability and viability of an ageing farming population (Caskie et al., 2002; ADAS, 2004; Riley 2016). Older farmers are reported to be less competitive in the current market place because they are slower to adopt new

innovative agricultural technologies (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011), alongside arguments that many are unwilling to recognize or accept their physical limitations (Reed, 1998; Peters et al., 2008).

A puzzling dilemma however, is that despite all the crucial and logical reasons for planning the incumbent's succession, the process is more often than not left to chance in many family businesses (Lansberg, 1988; Handler, 1994; Sharma et al., 2000; Ward, 2004; Palliam et al., 2011). The lack of and/or poor succession planning and management has been identified as a fundamental reason why many family businesses struggle to outlive the tenure of their founders and survive (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2003; Ward, 2004; Boyd, et al., 2014). Similarly, from a family farming perspective, despite the obvious need and benefits of succession planning, the process is unpopular with the farming community and thus rarely occurs while the older generation is still alive (Kimhi and Lopez, 1999) resulting in the experience for many successors in waiting being 'one of frustration, conflict and unfulfilled dreams' (Glover, 2011, p. 4). As research has found a positive correlation between young farmers and farm efficiency and innovation, such impediments can have adverse impacts on not only the development trajectory of a family farm but also the prosperity of the agricultural industry in general (Gillmor, 1999; Errington and Lobley, 2002; Lobley, 2010). A recent report on 'Land Mobility and Succession in Ireland' claims the lack of land mobility currently experienced in the Republic of Ireland is stifling agricultural growth by preventing young 'enthusiastic' farmers gaining access to productive assets (Bogue, 2013).

In response to this rigidity in the agrarian system, policy makers and practitioners in the Republic of Ireland have explored various mechanisms of financially stimulating and enticing intergenerational farm transfer over the past four decades. These included several short-lived Early Retirement Schemes (ERS) designed to encourage older farmers generating low returns to retire from the industry, which all yielded nothing like the required result (Commins and Kelleher 1973; Gillmor, 1999; Bika, 2007). Leonard et al. (2017) explain that these Early Retirement Schemes were largely unsuccessful in the sense that 'they only succeeded in incentivising farmers who were already close to retirement, rather than a fundamental restructuring of the age profile of Irish farmers' (p. 148). At present,

there is a concerted effort to ensure the most tax efficient means of transferring ownership and wealth of farms (Meehan, 2012; Leonard et al., 2017), however, the level of influence and impact of such measures has yet to be determined (ibid). In fact, despite recent financial incentives, Conway et al. (2016) highlight that ‘the reluctance of older farmers to exit or retire from the farming sector to facilitate young farmers who have a desire to start up persists’ (p. 166).

6.3.2 The Senior Generation's Pervasive Influence

As the ultimate power and authority of the family business resides with the older generation, ‘the one who has the gold, rules’ (Gersick et al., 1997, p. 195), their role is of utmost importance during the succession process as they are the person considered most responsible for the continuity of the family business (Christensen, 1953; Lansberg, 1988; Kelly et al. 2000; Palliam et al., 2011). According to Kenyon-Rouvinez and Ward (2005) the senior generation must effectively manage the succession process, because ‘decisions about the future ownership set the company on a path where the implications will be felt for generations’ (p. 59). Family business research highlights however that the incumbent’s difficulty and indeed inability to ‘let go’ of their control and power to orchestrate the daily running of the firm is one of the most significant obstacles in the succession process (e.g. Kets de Vries, 1985; Lansberg, 1988, Sharma et al., 2001; Le Breton-Miller et al., 2004; Pardo-del-Val, 2008). Family business literature points out that surrendering leadership of the business and dissociating oneself from the family firm is often ‘experienced as the first step toward losing control over life itself’ (Lansberg, 1988, p. 124). The fear of losing governance and authority of the firm by passing on the reins to the next generation is also compounded by the perception that ‘retiring from the firm will lead to a demotion from one's central role within the family’ (ibid). An incumbent may also resist the process as they fear ‘losing status in the family and the community as both may be closely intertwined with his or her role in the family business’ (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 22). Furthermore, an incumbent struggling with the concept of intergenerational succession may experience overwhelming feelings of jealousy and rivalry toward potential successors as they confront the reality of their own ageing and retirement (Lansberg, 1988; Kets de Vries, 2003). Combined,

these factors negatively influence the incumbent's ability and motivation to exit the business.

Due to the centrality and pervasive influence of the incumbent, such hesitations to change is a major concern, and calls for a deeper understanding of the age old critical forces that prevent and interfere with the process, particularly the manner in which the older generation cement their dominant position as head of the firm. This investigation is particularly necessary from a family farming perspective because few other businesses generate the emotional connections that farming does (Yarwood and Evans 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2013; Rogers et al., 2013; Conway et al; 2016). Farming is widely considered a way of life, not just a job, with associated cultural and emotional values, family traditions, norms, ideologies and behaviours (Gray and Lawrence, 2001; Barclay et al., 2007; Barclay et al., 2012; Price and Conn, 2012). According to Gill (2013) 'this results in a web of economic and emotional tie obligations which pull farming families in different directions' (p. 79). The keenness to 'let go' is also not common amongst the principles of family farms (Whitehead et al., 2012), with Burton (2004) and Burton et al. (2008) referring to a number of studies showing that farmers resist change that requires giving up their socio-cultural status acquired through productivist agricultural roles. Retirement in particular is recognised as major transitional challenge, because for many farmers, their personal identity, self-esteem and well-being are inextricably intertwined with their occupation (Convery et al., 2005; Riley, 2005; Rogers et al. 2013). Furthermore, as the 'audience' (or significant others) for farmers is other farmers (Burton, 2004), the lack of active engagement in farming that retirement would inevitably bring, has the potential to irrevocably change a farmer's 'position within previously familiar social groupings' (Riley, 2011, p. 25). Subsequently, Pitts et al. (2009) explain that the 'senior generation might be reluctant to engage in succession planning, as surrendering control of the farm relegates them to a more peripheral role' (p. 61). This paper further examines the factors that obstruct the intergenerational farm transfer process and suggests potential solutions as to how such impediments can be reduced and constructively governed.

6.4 Bourdieu's Interrelated Architecture of Concepts: Symbolic Capital, Power and Violence

In addition to the policy-related contribution, this study is theoretically pioneering the use of Bourdieu's conceptual triumvirate of symbolic capital, power, and the exercise of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), to uncover the micro-politics and power dynamics which exist within farm households. Bourdieu's work has been underutilized in family farm research (Burton et al., 2008; Glover 2011) and this paper offers a new perspective on the issue of intergenerational farm transfer. A key aspect of this discussion is to consider whether the senior generation of the farming community use their symbolic power to exert Bourdieu's emotive notion of symbolic violence on their successor, in an effort to retain and cement their existing controlling position into old age.

In order to come to a meaningful understanding of the core theoretical framework however, it is necessary to introduce Bourdieu's primary 'thinking tools' premising the sociology of everyday life, a complex theoretical triad consisting of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977). These three cornerstones of Bourdieu's theory of practice (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008) interrelate with each other, both conceptually and empirically (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu, essentially concerned with what people do in their day-to-day lives (Jenkins, 1992), explains that human cognition is influenced by the specific domains of social life in which one is embedded (Sieweke, 2012). These socially constructed environments such as industry, politics, and academia are conceptualized under the notion of fields (Yarwood and Evans, 2006). Through regular practice in a field, Bourdieu explains that individuals develop habitus, 'the set of dispositions or learned behaviours which provides individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives' (Blackledge, 2001, p. 349). Intertwined with their habitus, an agent is positioned within a specific field by virtue of their total accumulation of symbolic capital available to them in society (Nicholls, 2005). Symbolic capital is constituted when different, yet inextricably linked forms of capital '(economic (assets: animals, machinery, land, farm buildings, a family income etc.), social (networks, professional associations, family, friends and so on) and cultural capital (knowing how to operate the business, skills, knowledge of

generations etc.)' (Glover, 2010, p. 491), are socially perceived and recognized as legitimate bases for claiming esteem, honour, prestige, respect and recognition within a particular social setting (Bourdieu, 1985, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This derivative form of capital also gives symbolic power (form of authority) over other agents within a field. According to Swartz (1997) symbolic capital is 'a form of power that is not perceived as power but as legitimate demands for recognition, deference, obedience, or the services of others' (p. 90). Swartz (2013) later highlights that 'symbolic capital is a reformulation of Weber's idea of charismatic authority that legitimates asymmetrical power relations by accentuating selected personal qualities of elites as supposedly superior and natural' (p. 103). Bourdieu claims that exercising such power is a form of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence in contrast to overt violence, is 'a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling' (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 1-2). Despite Bourdieu's reference to 'gentle violence', 'symbolic violence is as real and as dangerous as other forms, if not more so, as it uses insidious channels that are harder to detect' (Moukarbel, 2009, p. 160). Webb et al. (2002) notes that symbolic violence may 'take the form of people being denied resources, treated as inferior or being limited in terms of realistic aspirations' (p. xvi).

Crucially, in order for symbolic violence to be effective, it needs to be performed on people who are predisposed by their habitus, or unconsciously acquired cultural dispositions, to feel or adhere to it (Moukarbel, 2009). Shucksmith (1993) previously argued that farmers' decision-making cannot be understood without reference to the concept of habitus. As these sets of deep-seated cultural dispositions are 'acquired through a gradual process of inculcation in which early childhood experiences are particularly important' (Bourdieu 1991, p. 12), this study hypothesises that the younger generation are inclined to be internally conditioned 'to accept the conditions of their domination as legitimate' (Swartz, 2013, p. 84) simply because it is considered 'the way of the world' (Webb et al. 2002, p. 25) within the farm household. The fact that habitus functions as an 'internal compass', orientating and guiding one's social behaviour and practices of everyday life (Panagiotopoulos, 1990; Maclean, et al., 2010), helps us understand why those on

the receiving end of symbolic violence, in this case the successor in waiting, often perceive their subordination as ‘natural’ and engage in social practices that act against their own self-interests (Ougaard and Leander, 2010). This acceptance of the existing hierarchical status quo, even by those deprived by it, is what Bourdieu refers to as ‘the paradox of doxa’, whereby people internalise the discourses of the dominant, meaning that ‘the most intolerable conditions of existence can so often be perceived as acceptable and even natural’ (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 1). This study evolves a diagrammatic expression of symbolic capital’s relationship with the rest of Bourdieu’s interlocking conceptual arsenal for studying social practice developed by Conway et al. (2016) to illustrate the manner in which symbolic power arises from one’s accumulation of symbolic capital, and how such dominance is exerted as symbolic violence within a particular social setting (see Figure 6.2).

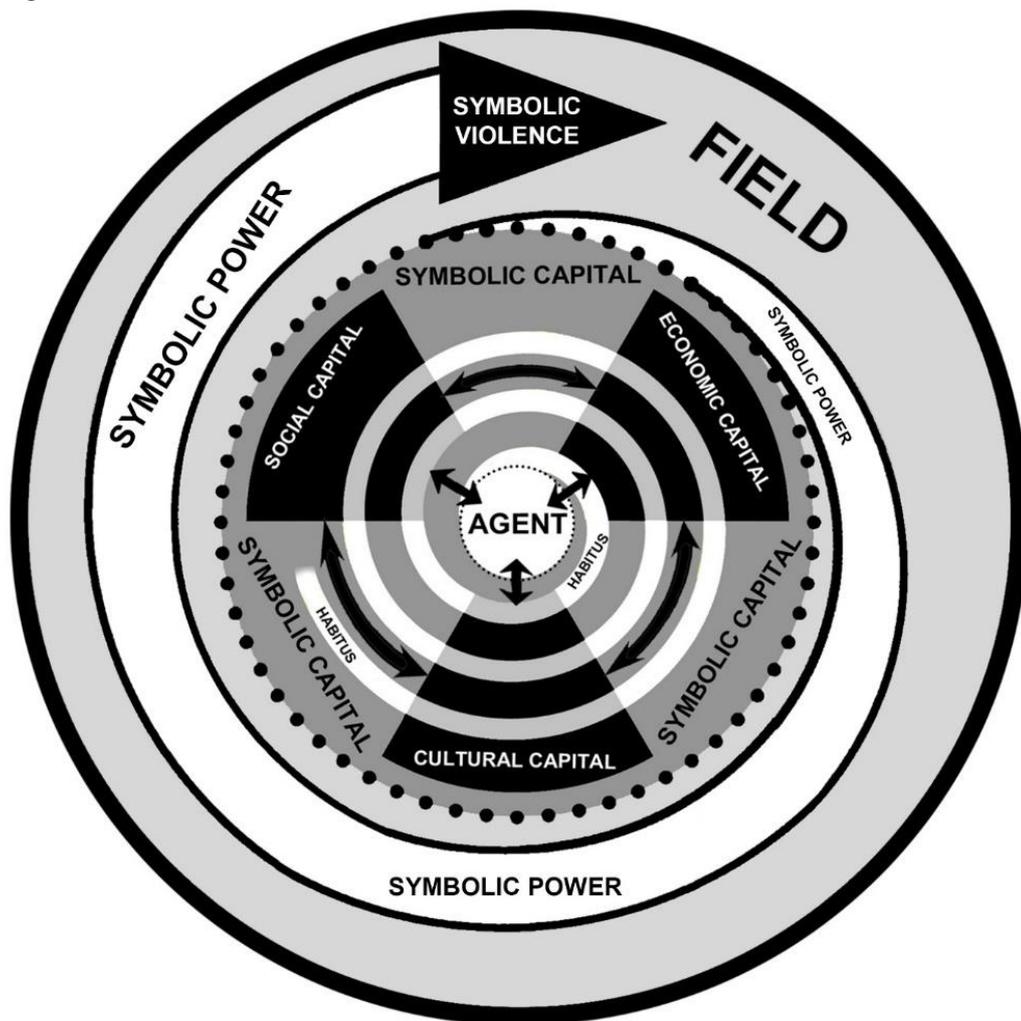


Figure 6.2: Diagrammatic Representation of Bourdieu’s Interrelated Architecture of Concepts

6.5 Data and Methodology

This research employs a multi-method triangulation design used by (Conway et al., 2016) in an attempt to obtain an in-depth, holistic understanding of the manner in which the older generation, galvanize and sustain his or her positional control and dominance as head of the family farm, and in doing so, inform possible new policies. For the purpose of this study triangulation was assured using a collection of both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of self-administered questionnaires in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews, thus increasing the reliability and validity of findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Furthermore, a multi-staged methodological approach allows for an interview - interviewee familiarity and trust to develop, which Riley (2011) claims ‘offers the advantage of allowing respondents to discuss a wider range of topics as they became more comfortable with the interview dynamic’ (p. 19).

A detailed survey was initially undertaken with 324 farmers aged 55 and over in attendance at a series of ‘Transferring the Family Farm’ clinics hosted by Teagasc (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland) to investigate the attitudes and behavioural intentions of the older generation of the farming community towards succession and retirement from farming. The reasoning for specifically focussing on farmers aged 55 and over is that one of the terms and conditions for farmers intending to retire under the 2007 Early Retirement Scheme (ERS 3) was that participants must have been ‘between his/her 55th and 66th birthday’ to be eligible (DAFM, 2007). Over 2,800 farmers attended these clinics held at 11 different locations throughout the Republic of Ireland in September and October 2014. 60% (n=194) of questionnaire respondents also gave their consent to be interviewed in more depth at a later date. As part of Teagasc’s campaign to advertise and promote these clinics, invitations were sent out to each of their 43,000 farming family clients to attend. This sample therefore provides an acceptable nationally representative sample of the Irish farming population across a broad spectrum of farming operations, typologies, geographical location and scale. In addition to probing the succession and retirement intentions of older farmers, survey respondents were also asked to state the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements, measured on five-point Likert scales. As outlined

by (Conway et al., 2016), these psychometric scales drew on factors that influence and hinder the succession and retirement process from the perspective of the senior generation, based on a review of family firm and family farm literature. In addition to eliciting the personal views of farmers, the survey collected respondents' relevant socio-demographic information.

In recognition of the 'imperceptible, insidious and invisible' nature of symbolic violence (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016, p. 148), survey data alone was not deemed sufficient enough nor appropriate to provide such an in-depth insight into operations of dispositional power and the subsequent 'production and reproduction of various social micro-practices, meanings and modes of subjectification' (Maclean et al., 2010, p. 329) internalized by the older generation within farm households. It was essential therefore to peel back the layers and broaden the farmer's survey responses, through the means of a Problem-Centred Interview approach (Witzel, 2000). Witzel (2000) explains that Problem-Centred Interviews can be combined with questionnaires in order to 'solve the problems arising in connection with samples and to relate the results generated by different procedures' (p. 3). Following frequency distribution and cross-tabulation analysis of aggregate data obtained at the Teagasc Clinics on the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme, it was possible to draw up a specific Problem-Centred Interview guideline containing preformulated questions on the issues that were identified to be subjectively significant to the sample farming population. Used in conjunction with a review of relevant family firm and family farm literature in the field, the quantitative questionnaire data essentially served as building blocks to structure the qualitative interviews. This qualitative methodology was a viable approach to further investigate the older generations widely reported reluctance and resistance to engage in intergenerational family farm transfer as it gathered objective evidence on human behaviour as well as on subjective perceptions and ways of processing social reality (Witzel, 2000). By converging its attention to the problem area, a predetermined Problem-Centred Interview guideline therefore allows for a greater emphasis on the focal aspects of the issue that needs to be addressed, which might not be tackled in a narrative interview setting (Scheibelhofer, 2005). This methodological tool also provides a framework of orientation to ensure comparability of interviews (Witzel, 2000).

A 10% (n=19) sample of the 194 farmers recruited at the Teagasc Clinics for the interview phase of data collection were sourced using a systematic sampling technique (see Table 6.1) and subsequently interviewed from May until August 2015. Given the personal nature of the issues under investigation the use of individual face-to face interviews in the homes of the respondents was deemed the most appropriate means of obtaining information from the senior generation of the farming community. The interviews lasted up to 2.5 hours and were digitally recorded, transcribed in full and assigned pseudonyms to protect participant's privacy. A journal was also kept to record field notes and impressions/observations of the interviewer. Content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was employed to code and systematically categorise the data collected. The emergent themes of (i) reiterating one's indispensability (ii) imposing one's mind-set (iii) unilateral acts of generosity and (iv) reasserting one's authority, were then integrated with relevant quotes from the interviews in order to capture feelings and support particular findings. Mayring's (2000) empirical, methodologically controlled technique that analysis textual data within its context of communication, presented a viable approach to uncover strategies and practices of symbolic violence as it 'follows content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification', subsequently enhancing reliability and validity (p. 2).

Pseudo Name	Gender	Age	Farming Enterprise	Regional Location	Considered Retirement	Succession Plan	Successor Identified
Frank	Male	57	Mixed livestock	West	Yes	Yes	Yes (Two sons)
Luke	Male	69	Mixed Livestock	West	Maybe	No	Yes (Son)
Dominic	Male	77	Mixed Livestock	West	Maybe	No	Yes (Son and Daughter)
Rory	Male	66	Sheep	West	No	No	No
Andrew	Male	64	Beef	West	Maybe	No	No
David	Male	70	Beef	North West	Maybe	No	Yes (Son)
Thomas	Male	80	Sheep and Tillage	North West	Yes	No	Yes (Daughter)
Sean	Male	75	Dairy and Poultry	North East	No	No	Yes (Son)
Mark	Male	61	Dairy	East	No	Yes	Yes (Two sons)
Claire	Female	82	Mixed Livestock and Tillage	East	No	No	Yes (Two sons)
Josh	Male	70	Tillage (Crop Production)	South East	Yes	No	Yes (Son)
Jack	Male	72	Dairy	South East	No	No	Yes (Son)
Ian	Male	67	Dairy	South	No	No	No
John	Male	70	Mixed Livestock	South	No	No	Yes (Daughter)
Colm	Male	71	Mixed Livestock	South West	No	Yes	Yes (Son)
Eimear	Female	65	Beef	South West	No	No	Yes (Son)
Brian	Male	85	Dairy	Midlands	Yes	No	Yes (Son)
Richard	Male	67	Beef	Midlands	Yes	No	Yes (Two sons)
Aoife	Female	68	Mixed Livestock	Midlands	No	No	Yes (Son)

Table 6.1: Interviewees' Details

6.6 Results

The presented findings are the result of a triangulation of the survey findings and complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews formulated and designed upon an analysis of quantitative data originally presented by Conway et al. (2016). As these clinics were geared towards farmers who are considering transferring their family farm, one would expect that the majority of those in attendance aged 55 and over would be open to the idea of retirement, however as Conway et al. (2016) outline, 33% (n=108) of the total number of farmers surveyed had not even considered retiring from farming in the future. 45% (n=145) indicated that they had, while 21% of farmers (n=67) were uncommitted in their answer. 1 farmer did not have any opinion on the matter.

Riley (2016) offers an important note of caution in interpreting such aggregate data. According to Riley (2016) the 'blurred geographical boundary between home and work' make surveys on the retirement intentions and status of older farmers 'difficult to define and locate' in comparison to 'other occupations where the move into retirement is often a distinct process' (p. 109). In fact, Loblely et al. (2010) add that the most common approach to farm retirement may not actually be retirement per se, but rather remaining in situ and 'continuing day-to-day involvement' on the farm, albeit with a reduction in some of the 'more arduous tasks' in old age (p. 51). Problem-Centred Interviews further reveal that the policy challenge to incentivize and support family farm transfer from one generation to the next is not straightforward, with 84% of participants being ill prepared for the process by not having a succession plan in place (see Table 1). Research findings suggest that one of the most significant difficulties in mobilizing the farm transfer process is due to the incumbent's hidden but potent use of symbolic violence against the younger generation as a means of avoiding and deterring the delegation of managerial responsibilities and ownership from occurring. The overriding strategies and practices of symbolic violence employed by the senior generation to emerge from the content analysis were elderly farmer's efforts to continually reiterate their indispensability to the daily management and operation of the family farm, the imposition of a mind-set of the disastrous consequences retirement would bring and unilateral acts of generosity. Additionally, older farmers were found to hold

contradictory and conflicting desires about farm transfer; even those who are in the process of or have already planned for succession resist ‘fading into the background’ and instead move to reassert their authority over the family farm.

In the succeeding sections, the identified modes of symbolic violence will be comprehensively linked to relevant issues in family farm and family firm transfer literature and effectively portrayed in selected comments direct from the interview participants. These quotes will vividly communicate the manner in which order and restraint are established and maintained within farm households, subsequently increasing our understanding of symbolic violence as a theoretical construct that can have real-world consequences. Furthermore, empirical research findings confirm the hypothesis made by Conway et al. (2016) that by virtue of the symbolic capital associated with elder status and gerontocratic power, the older generation can exploit their symbolic power as the ‘boss farmer’ in an effort to galvanize his or her control and ownership of the family farm. Research findings also support the premise put forward in family firm literature that while the younger generation are undoubtedly a crucial player in the succession process, the likelihood of a successful management transition is practically zero if the incumbent is not committed to the process (Lansberg, 1988; Sharma et al., 2001). Symbolic violence thus plays an instrumental role in the creation of cultural hegemonies (Bourdieu, 1991). The prominent themes of symbolic violence that were identified as having a significant hindering and deterring influence on the process of transferring the family farm will now be discussed.

6.6.1 Reiterating One’s Indispensability

Results from the empirical research indicate that the senior generation of the farming community resist transferring the family farm as a means of sustaining their decision-making influence and positional dominance as head of the farm business. Surprisingly, Conway et al. (2016) indicate that ‘71% of respondents who had not considered retiring from farming in the future have in fact identified a potential successor to their farm, somewhat contradicting the fact that 60% of these very farmers felt that the younger generation had the required experience, knowledge and skills to take over from them’ (p. 173). Regardless of their age, interview

participants were keen to reiterate the indispensable role that they play in the ongoing daily management and operation of the farm. Furthermore, in an effort to legitimize themselves, farmers stressed the importance of using their inestimable store of experience and knowledge to compensate for decreases in physical capacities inescapable with age, as they consider their everyday input to be central to the continued success of the family farm business. This is duly explained by Claire, an 82 year old mixed livestock and tillage farmer from the East of Ireland:

'I know I am getting on in the years but I'd still consider my role to be fierce important around here. My two sons who are in line to take over the farm do most of the physical labour these days but there are so many issues that crop up in the day to day running of the farm, so I need to be there to talk them through things and tell them about this and that. Ah I'd say the whole place would fall asunder without all my input and advice to be honest, oh they'd be lost without me. So I always put my opinion across and ah they really do value my expertise and that makes me feel good, especially when I'm starting to slow up a bit in my old age'.

Goeller (2012) previously highlighted the 'no one can do it as well as I can' attitude of many farm operators. Similarly, in a family firm context, Lansberg (1988) argued that 'regardless of skills or the successor's competence and skills' (p. 128), in many cases a successor is not able to replace the incumbent in their own eyes (ibid). Here we enter the realm of Bourdieu's interlocking notions of symbolic capital, power and violence. Symbolic capital, which is obtained through reputation and prestige, is critical to Bourdieu's understanding of how patterns of power and domination are reproduced in family farm businesses (Conway et al., 2016). Symbolic capital forms a kind of institutionally organized and, to some extent, guaranteed source of recognition that incorporates power as an inherent feature of one's social position (Bourdieu, 1977) e.g. the older generation's authoritative role as the 'boss farmer' in the family farm business' hierarchical structure, places them in a position to impose recognition' (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). Conway et al. (2016) explain however that the potential depletion of symbolic capital that may occur as

a result of relinquishing control of the farm and retiring is negative prospect for many older farmers, with 60% of questionnaire respondents who have not considered retirement agreeing that ‘they would no longer be seen as having a leading role in their household and local community’ if they were to do so. Conway et al. (2016) add that such an expectation leads many farmers to resist the process, even to their own children, reiterating previous research (see Barclay et al. 2012; Price and Conn, 2012; Whitehead et al., 2012). Problem-Centred Interviews reveal that the senior generation use their position as head of the family business, endowed with a lifelong accumulation of symbolic capital, to emphasize their legitimacy. For example, 70 year old beef farmer David from the North West of Ireland views himself centrally responsible for the well-being of the family farm:

‘I’ve brought this farm on leaps and bounds since I got my hands on it from my late father. I know every single nook and cranny of it at this stage you see, so I know what it takes to make it successful. My son is a fairly good worker, but honestly, when it comes to making the difficult decisions and situations, I just don’t think he is capable of being able to handle them the way I can yet you see.... I have more experience you see. When the going gets tough he just looks to me for an answer, and that’s fair enough, because he understands more than anyone all the hours and hard work I have put in to make the farm as successful as it is today’.

The use of such authoritarian discourse, what Bourdieu refers to the ‘symbolic efficacy of speech’ (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 11), is part and parcel of struggles over the monopoly of power in which those in dominant positions ‘operate essentially defensive strategies, designed to perpetuate the status quo by maintaining themselves and the principles on which their domination is based’ (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 83). In family farm households, where domination appears to be maintained through everyday interpersonal relations, the older generation generally succeed in internalizing and legitimizing their own culture and ways as superior to those of the younger generation through the exercise of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1984). According to Bourdieu (1990) symbolic violence accounts for forms of coercion which extorts submission without physical force; that is, ‘gentle, invisible violence,

unrecognised as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, debts, piety, in a word, of all the virtues honoured by the ethic of honour' (p. 127). Powerful possessors of symbolic capital such as older farmers (Conway et al., 2016) can therefore effectively mask and obfuscate the power and hierarchies produced in social practice by making them appear natural, neutral and inevitable (Ougaard and Leander, 2010; Sanli, 2011). The self-reinforced tendency for indispensability is illustrated by Luke, a 69 year old mixed livestock farmer from the West of Ireland:

'I know what works and what doesn't work on the farm... I know how to do all the wheeling and dealing. As that Oscar Wilde fella once said, 'wisdom comes with winters', and I tell you one thing for certain, you learn a lot more through hard graft and experience than you would by reading a book or by going to college and my son knows that too'.

Such a tacit and subtle form of oppression exerted by the older generation results in them having sufficient legitimacy within the family business 'to remain in power as long as he or she desires' (Sharma, et al., 2001, p. 22). Lansberg (1988) observes the inclination of the incumbent to develop 'an exaggerated image of the disastrous consequences that their retirement would bring' on performance of the business. (p. 124). Given the fact that 'all agents in the field to some extent share the same habitus' (Moi, 1991, p. 1022), such a bleak outlook frequently becomes an integral part of the family firm's culture and creates a powerful rationale within the family to resist the 'delegation of authority' whilst also bolstering the need for the incumbent to remain centrally involved in day-to-day decisions in the business into the future (ibid). Family firm literature highlights that such a self-reinforcing sense of indispensability to the family business significantly contributes to problematic successions, an issue, which increasingly comes to the fore at later stages of psychosocial development with mounting retirement pressures (Sonnenfeld, 1987; Lansberg, 1988; Handler, 1994).

6.6.2 Imposing One's Mind-set

Empirical research findings reveal that there are negative connotations attached to the 'twin process' of succession and retirement, that have the potential to become part of the successor in waiting's indoctrination, thus averting necessary planning for the future of the farm business from occurring. Conway et al. (2016) indicate that 87% of farmers surveyed at the Teagasc Clinics agreed that 'the concept of retirement is not popular or well-regarded within the farming community' (p. 172), a situation unchanged from research carried out in the Republic of Ireland in the 1970s (Commins and Kelleher 1973). Conway et al. (2016) explain that the prospect of surrendering one's 'professional and personal identity upon transferring managerial control of the farm and retiring' is a concept that the senior generation 'find difficult to accept' (p. 174). Furthermore, as 'struggles for recognition are a fundamental dimension of social life' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 22), Conway et al. (2016) add that farmers resist 'stepping aside' on the basis of an 'anticipated loss of the recognition and social status' that they have acquired in the community derived from being the primary operator of the farm business (ibid). In an effort to legitimize and maintain their identity, status and dominant position in the farms' existing hierarchical structure, Problem-Centred Interviews conducted with farmers discovered that many harbour several myths about the detrimental effects relinquishing managerial duties and ownership to the next generation would force onto their own personal health and emotional wellbeing. Rather than dealing with and accepting the need for intergenerational succession, interviewees were keen to give detailed insights about the disastrous consequences of what happened to 'a fella down the road' upon doing so. Retirement from farming in particular was continually reported to involve a deep-seated sense of loss of professional identity and social status which has lead, if the participant's stories are to be believed, to anxiety, depression and in extreme cases, suicide amongst farmers in their locality. Such sorrow is pertinently narrated by mixed livestock farmer, Luke from the West of Ireland:

'I'll tell you a story about a fella down the road, he was in his 70s, he was a real tasty farmer, he had everything done right, he had the yard clean, everything was kept perfect. Next thing he was pushing on in the years and even though

he was reluctant to, he signed the farm over to a neighbour of his. The neighbour told the owl farmer that he'd give him a few pound if he kept an eye on things and looked after the stock for him. The owl farmer was delighted with this because even though the farm was set to the neighbour, it was seen that he was still farming you see and he could potter around the farm as much as he wanted. That was fine until the neighbour started overcrowding the sheds with cattle and the owl farmer couldn't clean them out properly then like he used to. Next thing the owl farmer said to the neighbour jes you'd want to take a few of them cattle out of that shed, tis overstocked. Next thing the neighbour got annoyed and said to the owl farmer don't be telling me what to do, tis my farm now, so just stay in your house and don't mind coming out anymore, I don't want you interfering. Next thing the owl farmer (chose to end his own life). The neighbour didn't have to worry about him then, the owl farmer called it off, he had nothing left to live for you see, he was gone. He had lost control you see, he thought he was kind of still in control, and that made him feel happy, but the realisation that he wasn't was too much to handle.... the poor man'.

Barclay et al. (2007) previously highlighted that the experience of retirement is frequently associated with grief, social disapproval and a corresponding decline in self-esteem. Conway et al. (2016) add that there exists 'a cultural expectation within the farming community that farmers do not retire. Those who do are generally perceived to have a defeatist attitude or else have no option but to do so due to ill health' (p. 172). The grief and anguish associated with relinquishing control of the farm is also recounted by Josh, a 70 year old tillage farmer from the South East of Ireland:

'I remember there was mighty owl woman that lived near us here. She was 88 and she still had full control of the farm, lock, stock and barrel. Oh a formidable woman so she was,

healthy, hardy, active and outgoing. But eventually when push came to shove, she decided to sign over the farm to her son. seven weeks later though she was in the local geriatric home, when there was no reason for her to be in there. You see that's what losing control of the farm does to ya, you lose hope, you go downhill, fast, and it's sad that'.

This thought process may be explained by Olsberg, (1997) who previously highlighted that retirement as a life stage, is seen to bear the 'intangible but powerful influence of inherited traditions and historical attitudes about retirement as a time of decrepitude and decay' (p. 2). Furthermore, Foskey (2005) highlights that there has been an assumption that 'retirement is linked to withdrawal, not only from the workforce, but also from the economic and social life of the community' (p. 23). Such an ideological fixation within the farming community may lead to the assumption that 'retired people become senile and incapacitated' (ibid). This direct connection between retirement and subsequent despondency was depicted by Ian, a 67 year old dairy farmer from the South of Ireland:

'I have seen one or two fellas and they were a lot healthier people when they were working than when they gave it all up, not just in agriculture but in every field. There is kind of a fantasy world out there that 'I am retired and I can do all I like', but I'd say without anything purposeful to do you'd fall into a rut pretty quickly'.

By projecting their own negative thoughts and feelings towards the process onto the younger generation through the means of anecdotal accounts of particularly bad outcomes about stepping aside, they invariably shape their perceptions and enforce a similar mind-set, such is the socially recognized authority afforded to them to do so via their possession of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1985; De Clerq and Voronov, 2009). According to Bourdieu (2000), being the bearer of symbolic capital entitles an individual to 'state with success what merits being known or recognised' (p. 242) enabling them to not only speak on behalf of the group as an authorised spokesperson but also the capacity to impose (and even inculcate) 'values, norms,

beliefs and so on', on others in the field (Swartz, 2013, p. 84), which are often arbitrary but not recognized as such (Bourdieu, 1979).

The authority and power to dominate a social setting and enforce a particular 'vision of the world' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 133) upon the dispositions of others in such a way that it is experienced as legitimate, as taken-for-granted, is viewed by Bourdieu as symbolic violence (McNay, 1999; Townsend 2012; Swartz, 2013). This concept has its roots in Marxist theory of 'false consciousness', whereby oppressed social agents internalise dominant ideologies (Marston, 2002). According to Henderson et al. (2014) symbolic violence 'enables the reproduction of culture in a manner that is both gentle and hidden' (p. 338). These findings also reinforce Lansberg's (1988) argument that the incumbent often develops a 'complex set of compromises and rationalizations that prevent them from engaging in succession planning' (p. 124). By orientating their potential successor's minds towards a 'particular version of reality', they thereby maintain and sustain authority over them and limit their 'opportunities to voice alternative versions' (Baroutsis, 2015, p. 8). Symbolic violence therefore secures 'compliance to domination through the shaping of beliefs' (Lukes, 2005, p. 143 - 144).

6.6.3 Unilateral Acts of Generosity

Problem-Centred Interviews reveal that asymmetric hierarchal relations within farm households are also sustained through subtle and disguised strategies of power that camouflage domination with a semblance of gratuity, moral obligation, and personal loyalty. Lansberg, (1988) previously found that with a 'paternalistic gesture of goodwill' (p. 129) potentially comes a great deal of unconscious guilt for the younger generation to express their opinions with their elders regarding the transfer of additional control and authority of the farm, at a risk of appearing disloyal. Such hesitancies sabotage their chances of taking over (ibid). An apparent act of oppressive generosity identified in this research is described by 77 year old mixed livestock farmer Dominic from the West of Ireland:

'Ah shur look it, even though I amn't ready to hand over the farm to my son and daughter, I have given them a couple of

cows and ewes each to keep them happy for the time being. Ah I think they are satisfied enough with that, ah but shur why wouldn't they be though, shur they got them for nothing, I didn't ask them for a penny. A few stock of their own will tide them over for a whileen anyway until I am ready to retire... if I do at all'.

By 'gifting' the successor in waiting with a percentage of their livestock enterprise, the older generation inevitably gain the 'upper hand' however by subjecting them to 'a situation of personal debt and obligation' (Moukarbel, 2009, p. 159). The reasons why such actions would hold the younger generation in a state of lasting indebtedness may be related to their positionality in returning the favour due to the significant difficulty of obtaining sufficient resources and capital to get established in farming (Nuthall and Old, 2017). According to Rankin (2002) 'a gift which is not matched by a counter-gift creates a lasting bond, restricting the debtor's freedom' subsequently forcing him or her 'to adopt a peaceful, cooperative attitude' (p. 7). John, a 70 year old mixed livestock farmer from the South of Ireland, recalls how he recently purchased cattle for his daughter in acknowledgement of her contribution to the farm:

'Ah I look after me daughter very well and she is well aware well that I do. We were both at a pedigree Angus sale a few weeks ago actually and I told her to pick out a few heifers and I'd buy them for her. Oh the two eyes lit up in her head when I said that. We ended up buying 3 smashing quality heifers, the exact one's she marked down on the sale catalogue and all, oh she is delighted with them, they are a picture. My daughter has a great eye for stock you see, just like myself, so I am only delighted to show her how much it means to me that she keeps an interest in breeding Angus cattle'.

Bourdieu stressed the prominence of symbolic power and symbolic violence in such acts of generosity. Bourdieu observed that such a 'gift exchange' is 'an attempt to accumulate symbolic capital and gain an advantage over the other party' (Bourdieu

1977, p. 178). According to Bourdieu (1977) ‘giving is a way of possessing; because in the absence of any juridical guarantee, or any coercive force, one of the few ways of ‘holding’ someone is to keep up a lasting asymmetrical relationship’ (p. 195). Therefore, in the context of this research as the older generation have generally amassed a great deal of symbolic capital over their lifetime as head of the family farm (Conway et al., 2016), they can gain consent of the younger generation through such gestures of ‘giving’ and ‘kindness’. Furthermore, Werbner (1996) highlights that such unilateral gifting, from old to young, serves to legitimize hierarchical structures of power by converting them into ‘soft and disguised’ forms of domination through symbolic violence. Bourdieu highlights that the ‘misrecognition’ of arbitrary power relations as personal relations can bind the oppressed to their oppressors through feelings of trust and obligation (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1998).

6.6.4 Reasserting One's Authority

The revelation that the senior generation hold conflicting and contradictory desires about the ultimate goals of the farm is also a key empirical finding. Interestingly, Conway et al. (2016) indicate that 64% of questionnaire respondents at the Teagasc Clinics who have considered retirement agreed that ‘the lifestyle quality from being a farmer is far greater than can be quantified by any financial incentive to leave farming’ (p. 170). Furthermore, 32% of these farmers agreed that ‘they could not imagine what they would do if they permanently ceased all farming activity’ (ibid). Conway et al. (2016) note that such discrepancies illustrate the ‘divergence of opinion and uncertainty between retirement expectations and retirement realisations, resulting in the decision to retire being difficult to execute and follow through’ (p. 170). Gagnè et al. (2011) previously argued that ‘simply because business leaders have a date in mind for their retirement does neither mean that they perceive their retirement in a positive light nor that they concretely take steps to plan it’ (p. 300). Such findings are consistent with psychological research, showing that attitudes are not necessarily related to behaviours (e.g., Ajzen, 1991). Furthermore, Conway et al. (2016) indicate that 71% of the total number of farmers surveyed at the Teagasc Clinics agreed that it was important to be recognised as an

active, skilled and productive farmer amongst their peers in the farming community. This finding illustrates the significance attached to the ‘production-orientated’ farming identity (Burton and Wilson, 2006, p. 95).

Problem-Centred Interviews revealed that even those farmers who already have or are planning in theory to transfer managerial duties and ownership to the next generation, often move to reassert their authority and influence over the family farm and the critical decisions that are made within it while they are still alive. For example, Brian, a 85 year old Dairy farmer from the Midlands of Ireland deems it essential that he continues to have an authoritative role, despite having transferred ownership of the farm over to his son:

‘Ah loosing ownership of the farm doesn’t bother me that much, but loosing management, now that is a different story, oh let me tell you it certainly is. I still like to have my finger in the pie you see, I mean, I like to make sure things are done the way they have always been done around here. I want to see my son farming my way you see, that’s very important’.

The older generation’s great difficulty and unwillingness to delegate sufficient responsibility is a widely-reported aspect of family farm transfer (Foskey, 2005; Lobley et al., 2010; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Barclay et al., 2012; Whitehead et al., 2012; Conway et al., 2016). This reluctance to cede control can ‘lead to a confused picture of both succession and control with some successors having autonomy in major issues such as the strategic direction of the business but still without access to the cheque book’ (ADAS, 2004, p. 11). For example, Colm, a 71 year old mixed livestock farmer from the South West of Ireland, has transferred the vast majority of the farm to his son, however he is still in control of the farm’s financial affairs:

‘Even though most of the farm is now signed over to my son, in my head it’s still mine, well while I am fit and able to do a bit around the place anyways. In fairness though, I’ve made sure that all the returns on the cattle and sheep and everything else are going into the farm account which is

now in his name, but at the same time, I stay in charge of that account, because I do the biro work you see, I sign the cheque books and that kind of stuff. It makes sense though, like I've been doing it for a hell of a lot longer than he has after all'.

Similarly, 65 year old beef farmer Eimear also from the South West of Ireland maintains a strong presence on the farm:

'My son is running the farm now in his own right, ever since his father died. I'd be still keeping an eye on things though and I still have the cheque book, but he has all the say on the running of the farm. I am always there to help out on the farm and he loves to have me there. I tell him what I think is right and wrong and he always listens to me'.

Such domineering actions and control of farm's 'cheque book' may make it difficult for the younger generation to integrate and evolve into a more formidable role in family farm business. Furthermore, empirical findings highlight that interviewees, although a heterogenous group, continue to make major decisions about the future direction of the farm. Sean, a 75 year old farmer from the North East, who farms in partnership with his son, has recently converted their system of farming to Dairy.

'We've recently made the big transition from suckler farming into Dairying. Ah it probably would have been my influence that got my son to consider changing to be honest.... My son had a bit of a problem selling all the sucklers at first though you see, broke his heart actually, because he would have been very much into the sucklers. He liked the cows, he liked to see them calving and he liked to see them growing up.... but at the end of the day, the profit wasn't there so that's why I had to influence him to get into the dairying. Ah at least he knows now though that keeping sucklers is not a good thing to be at'.

Weigel and Weigel (1990) previously found that 'farm offspring are socialized toward independence and the control of their own enterprise while still being more

or less controlled in the two-generation farm operation' (p. 383). Such a phenomenon can relegate new entrants to a so-called 'farmer's boy' status (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Uchiyama et al., 2008; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Although this is a gender-biased term, it does however aptly conceptualize a successor who has worked on the farm for a long time, but has been accorded few formal managerial and decision-making responsibilities (ibid). This action strikes a chord with Bourdieu's theoretical schema. The older generation's cache of symbolic capital derived from being the senior generation of the farm household (Conway et al., 2016) arms them with the power to limit and even hijack their successors autonomy and decision-making opportunities by exercising symbolic violence over them. Haugaard (2007) emphasises the denial of agency and voice of the 'other' in symbolic violence. Empirical findings highlight that older farmers often perceive changes proposed by the previously subordinate younger generation to the existing farm business' managerial and operational practices as unnecessary and aversive. This is aptly illustrated by 85 year old Dairy farmer Brian, whose son aspires to switch to drystock farming, much to Brian's disapproval:

'My son turned around to me a while back and told me that he wanted to get into drystock farming instead of sticking with the dairy. Well I said to him, you won't have a penny left if you go at that a maneen, so don't even bother thinking about it. Even though I wouldn't force anything down his throat, he generally listens to me in the end so he does, because he knows that I have been around long enough to know what I am talking about. Like, there is money to be made in Dairy after all, especially when you have a grand wee herd of cows like the one we have built up here so it wouldn't make sense to try anything else. It would be foolish in fact. Dairying is the only way to go'.

As 87% of farmers surveyed at the Teagasc Clinics agree that 'their farm represents years of hard work and what they have managed to achieve over their lifetime' (Conway et al., 2016, p. 171), the purpose of this mode of symbolic violence is simply the desire to preserve the status quo of the farm. Glover (2010) previously noted that such ambitions and new modes of thinking have the potential to place

significant emotional stress on the farmer who may have invested considerable time and resources throughout their life improving the herd's genetics, thereby knowing the breeding lines of each cow. Of particular interest here is the authoritarian discourse used by the older generation, with the imposition of a 'correct way' at the expense of limitless other ways (Schubert, 2002) in an effort to give their own farming methods and practices a fortified legitimacy.

The continuing subordination of the younger generation to the older generation can be explained by the 'gentle, disguised' nature of symbolic violence as a mode of domination (Bourdieu, 1990). The crux of the problem with symbolic violence lies in the fact that such practices of omnipresent domination, which internally constrain and marginalize potential successors, are not recognised as such and instead are so entrenched in sociological and cultural norms that they are constituted as the 'natural state of affairs' (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu, 1991), thus becoming accepted as common practice. Such misrecognition of power occurs because the younger generation are often predisposed by their habitus, or cultural dispositions, to legitimize and adhere to the set of values and beliefs of their elders (Moukarbel, 2009). The concept of habitus, in tandem with that of symbolic violence, is instrumental in reproducing class and power relations (Bourdieu, 1984), as it equips the dominating and dominated with shared 'desires, motivation, knowledge, skill, routine and strategies that will reproduce their inferior (or superior) status' (Smith, 2001, p. 136). According to Goeller (2012) however 'second guessing and 'I told you so' comments will produce an unconfident successor who will be insecure in their abilities' (p. 160).

Family firm literature notes that an incumbent who plans for succession out of feasibility rather than desirability lacks wholehearted commitment to the process (Sharma et al., 2003). As the senior generation, 'tends to be the dominant player' in the succession process (Lansberg, 1988, p. 124), such conflicting and dysfunctional desires prevents any real progress toward the implementation of a feasible business continuance model (ibid) and can 'make life unpleasant for the successor, as well as do real harm to the fabric of the family business' (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 23). Related to this view, Davis and Harveston (1999) introduced the notion of 'generational shadow'. This term refers to those successions which prove to be disrupted or incomplete, when the senior generation resists fading into the

background and instead ‘retains a significant role in the organization post succession’ (Davis and Harveston, 1999, p. 320). The older generation’s excessive and inappropriate involvement in the family business can lead to a ‘blurring’ of the successor’s authority and responsibility (ibid). Keating (1996) note however that many older farmers do not view their continued involvement in the family farm business as an impediment to their children’s careers.

6.7 Discussion

The older generation’s reluctance and indeed resistance in many cases to alter the status quo of the existing management structure of the family farm is undoubtedly strong within the farming community. The fact that ‘farm operations that would be considered financially sound, well-managed businesses can slowly collapse and fail because the older generation is unable or unwilling to face the contradicting desires of seeing the next generation succeed yet retain the independence and self-identity farming provides’ (Kirkpatrick, 2013, p. 3) makes this a major concern.

Specifically, not unlike elsewhere in the world, Joint farming ventures (JFVs), including arrangements such as farm partnerships, share farming and contract rearing have been promoted within Irish policy discourses as succession strategies that can enable young ambitious farmers become formal partners in the farm business, whilst also allowing for the older generation to remain embedded in the farming community and work on the farm (ADAS, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; DAFM, 2011). In theory, JFVs, appear to ‘tick all the boxes’ in relation to the ideal family farm transfer facilitation model as they provide a function for intergenerational cooperation, the pooling of skills, labour and knowledge and overcoming the obstacle of land mobility, subsequently helping to increase farm viability and competitiveness (ibid). While appreciating the merits and potential benefits of JFVs, empirical findings from this research highlight that the policy challenge to mobilize and support such unconventional tenures is not straightforward due to the micro-politics and management power dynamics at play within family farm households nor the complex emotional dynamics facing ageing farmers brought to light by Conway et al. (2016). By virtue of their symbolic capital

associated with elder status and gerontocratic power as the ‘boss farmer’ in the farm household, the older generation often exert symbolic violence on the successor in waiting by employing a hidden but potent mix of defence mechanisms and tactics to avoid and deter the delegation of managerial responsibilities from occurring, such as the reiterating their indispensability, the imposition of beliefs and unilateral gifting. Empirical findings also highlight that the older generation often resist ‘fading into the background’ even after the farm has been transferred, and instead move to reassert their control and dominance on the farm, thus forcing the younger generation to work under a ‘generational shadow’ (Davis and Harveston, 1999, p. 314).

Crucially however, the acts of symbolic violence exerted on the younger generation identified in this research do not appear to be intermittent, rather empirical findings suggest that the older generation tend to create an environment in which they empower themselves within the farm household, without fully being aware themselves that they are perpetuating the hierarchical status quo within the farm household. Take for example 70 year old beef farmer David, from the North West of Ireland, who appears to be the unquestioning and unquestioned gatekeeper to his son’s pathway into farming:

‘I had all my children out working on the farm with me from a very young age, I’d say since they were 5 or 6 years old... I’d be always drilling into them until I was blue in the face that you have to be prepared to work hard to get places in life, there is nothing soft out there. These days my youngest son is back home, he was away for a few years working in some office job. He is well in his thirties now and is interested in taking over the place here. Ah I am fierce happy he is back, twill keep the farm going in the family... but I have to make sure that he has that drive and work ethic in him that you need to be a proper farmer before I start signing anything over to him yet. What I am saying is that he has to be willing to sacrifice an awful amount of his time like I do and like what my father did before me, or he won’t be as successful. I’d be turning in my grave if anything bad

happened to the farm when I'm gone, I mean if my son just sat back and let all my hard work go to waste, so it important that he respects my wishes... both now and when I am gone'.

The above quote illustrates the apparent legitimacy and justification of power wielded by the older generation of the farming community. Certainly, the interviewee did not view his dominating discourse and behaviour as being negative, but rather as a constructive challenge to his son to prove his worth on the farm in a positive manner before a succession transition can occur. Such narratives and actions, heavily authoritarian in nature, appear to be a product of the older generation's habitus, an 'often unconscious process related to the internalization of a cultural arbitrary' (Cushion and Jones, 2006, p. 158). It must be noted however, that by subjecting the successor in waiting to an unnoticed (partly unconscious) lurking sense of domination delivered through everyday channels of communication and cognition, the older farmer invariably 'safeguard or improve their position and impose the principle of hierarchisation most favourable to their own products' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 101), thus preserving their social privileges across generations (Johnson, et al., 2008).

Research indicates that such actions and mannerisms are impacting on the younger generation's ability to embark on a true and meaningful career path of full time farming, and under such incidences it could take 20 years to assume management of the farm (Keating, 1996; Kirkpatrick 2012). Pietola et al. (2003) claim that the longer the exit decision is delayed and the age of the older farmer increases, the lesser the probability of farm transfer. While some successors in waiting may be able to articulate their dissatisfaction at such a long period of family apprenticeship, this research suggests that many are predisposed by their habitus (essentially a conservative predisposition), to consent to their treatment and accept the 'dominant values and the behavioural schema' (Cushion and Jones, 2006, p. 144) utilized by the older generation as 'natural, like common sense' (Neuman and Fjellström, 2014, p. 272). Swartz (2013) suggests that symbolic violence is in fact 'misrecognised obedience,' where symbolic power is accepted as legitimate rather than arbitrary (p. 83). The 'valid' use of symbolic violence by the dominant therefore, imprinted and encoded in the habitus of the dominated helps us understand how the younger

generation 'play a role in reproducing their own subordination through the gradual internalisation and acceptance of those ideas and structures that tend to subordinate them' (Connolly and Healy, 2004, p. 15). Such an argument has led family business researchers to the hypothesis that initial satisfaction with the succession process will 'depend on the extent to which an incumbent is willing to step aside' (Sharma et al., 2001, p. 23). Ultimately, this requires a mental withdrawal from the family business as much as a physical withdrawal (Whitehead et al., 2012, p. 220). Palliam et al. (2011) argues that if an incumbent is willing to do this, 'a major impediment would be removed' (p. 27).

This paper refutes such drastic claims however, and follows Conway et al. (2016) in arguing that it is essential that any new initiatives or policies put in place to encourage and support intergenerational farm transfer, must allow for the older generation to remain active and productive in the family farm business because being recognised as such is central to an elderly farmer's sense of self. Furthermore, retirements can create critical shortages of experienced personnel, which in turn can have negative effects on farm performance. The older generation hold an invaluable store of locally specific tacit and lay knowledge developed over years of regularized interaction and experience working on the family farm, that the younger generation have not yet accumulated (Gill, 2013). Such soil-specific human capital (Laband and Lentz, 1983) is not easily transferable, communicated or learnable (Gill, 2013), and as a result, the family farm may be left in the hands of a young, inexperienced farmer, unable to make competent management decisions without the continued guidance and advice of the senior generation.

This research recommends however that the older generation can continue to make a useful contribution to the family farm business provided they do so in a constructive manner by not only delegating sufficient responsibility and sufficient resources to the younger generation but also by not interfering in a negative way with their aspirations and goals for the future of the farm. This echoes previous family farm literature over the past three decades which has continuously highlighted the reduction in management control as an important element of the process. Salamon and Markan (1984) stressed that 'the older farmer must encourage younger family members to be involved, bring them into the decision-making process and permit some sharing of control to maintain peak efficiency' (p. 174),

while Gasson and Errington (1993) argue that the older generation must be aware of the needs of the next generation and relinquish ownership rights of the farm to ensure continued involvement and interest in the family farm business. If this is not the case, the farmer runs the risk of not having a successor at all because their children may eventually lose interest and motivation continually working in the incumbent's shadow and subsequently go in search of alternative employment elsewhere in order to achieve their career ambitions and personal development (McCrostie et al. 1998; Kimhi and Lopez, 1999) resulting in potentially good young farmers being lost to the agricultural sector (Nuthall and Old, 2017). This phenomenon is referred to as 'corporeuthanasia' in family firm literature, which Danco (1982) defines as 'the owner's act of wilfully killing off the business he loves by failing to provide in his lifetime for a viable organization with clear continuity' (p. 5).

In this respect, the JFVs model is seen as an ideal stepping stone to farm transfer as it provides a function for intergenerational cooperation, whilst also allowing for greater recognition, financial independence and leadership opportunities for the younger generation (ADAS, 2007). Empirical findings from this research however suggest that even the most sophisticated of programs and mechanisms designed to incentivise farmers and their families to manage the process will be of little value if policy makers and extension specialists across the globe fail to effectively consider methods of addressing the intricate array of complex strategies and practices of symbolic violence employed by the older generation. The presence of internally constrained power relations in farm households, rendered invisible by a process of naturalization means that both generations often 'come to accept the status quo as the natural order' (Maclean et al., 2010, p. 329) as it is embedded in the habitus of all concerned.

One could argue that the use of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence may be 'unduly provocative' (Emmerich et al., 2015, p. 7) when investigating the micro-politics and practices at play in family farm households. However, we are not suggesting the entire older generation of the farming community are, in fact, a symbolically violent segment of society. Rather empirical research findings throw into salient relief that the exercise of power and authority has the capacity to 'dominate, rather than emancipate' (Emmerich et al., 2015, p. 7) the successor in

waiting, and therefore, a deeply ingrained asymmetry occurs. Hennessey et al. (2014) previously highlighted how older people are capable of exercising power within their rural communities in both a positive (knowledge, connection) and negative (impeding, hindrance) fashion. The socially recognized and approved authority afforded to older farmers via their formidable store of symbolic capital appears to be a fact of social life within farm households. The challenge for policy makers and practitioners therefore is to consider methods in which this power can be legitimately exercised by the senior generation, in the interest of whatever ‘good’ is at hand (in this case to preserve the crucial intergenerational dynamic of family farming), and to remain cognizant of the fact that it has the potential to become ‘symbolic violence’, and act against the good at hand (which, in this case, would involve the inappropriate domination of the younger generation). As young people’s agricultural participation is one of the fundamental variables affecting the future structure of the family farm, agricultural growth and the broader sustainability of rural social life throughout the world (Hennessey and Rehman, 2007; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Nuthall and Old, 2017), this study has global relevance and will be of particular interest to countries throughout the European Union where the age profile of the farming population and the rate of succession and retirement have been matters of concern and unease for decades (Commins and Kelleher 1973; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Bika, 2007; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015; Leonard et al., 2017).

6.8 Conclusion

The findings of this study provide an in-depth understanding of the complex nature of intergenerational family farm transfer. As the average age of the farming population is increasing worldwide, this investigation comes in a very timely manner. This research makes a significant contribution by demonstrating the relevance of applying family firm literature when investigating the strategies of influence and power exercised by the incumbent. A wealth of family business literature exists on this issue, whereas its counterpart from a family farming perspective is largely absent. Connecting these previously disparate literature, allowed us insight into the various actions that have a hindering and deterring

influence on the succession process. The most significant contribution of this paper to current needs and priorities within policy and research however lies in its empirical insights, which demonstrate the appropriateness and importance of utilizing Bourdieu's perspective on power in bringing to the surface the micro-politics and practices at play in farm households that can derail and deter the succession and retirement process. As a form of domination, symbolic violence is exercised in a virtually unrecognisable, insidious manner meaning that such power evidenced in everyday life could easily be overlooked in a study of intergenerational farm transfer. Adopting this novel approach has unpacked and deconstructed the manner in which the older generation attempt to retain and reinforce their authority and control over the younger generation, thus confirming the hypothesis made by Conway et al., (2016) that older farmers 'exploit their symbolic power as head of the household and farm' (p. 175). In doing so, it challenges assertions that Bourdieu's theories are too abstract to have any empirical value (Jones, 2015), by bridging the gap between symbolic violence as a theory and its manifestation in farming family relationships.

While accountants, solicitors and financial advisors all have essential roles to play in the family farm transfer planning process, the complex array of human and family dynamics involved suggest that policy makers and practitioners should avoid the often implicit assumption that mere economic incentives and the presence of an enthusiastic potential successor are all that is required for a successful succession transition. It is crucial that such professionals are consciously aware that the extent of effective intergenerational transfer planning lies heavily upon the older generation's acceptance and willingness to alter the status quo of the farms' existing hierarchical structure, as they have the respect and authority to do so by virtue of their lifelong accumulation of symbolic capital. Without the incumbent's wholehearted commitment, family firm and family farm literature both confirm that the likelihood of a successful management transition from the older generation to the successor in waiting is almost impossible.

Fundamental action/change in existing and future intergenerational family farm transfer policy and schemes is required if the senior generation is to maintain and sustain normal day to day farming activity and behaviour into old age, whilst also 'releasing the reins' to allow for the delegation of managerial responsibilities and

ownership of the family farm to their successors. If this is not the case, there will continue to be extraordinary socio-economic challenges for younger people aspiring to pursue farming as a career. As every farmer and each family situation is unique, this study acknowledges that there are no uniform or easily prescribed solutions to resolving this conundrum, however as suggested by Nuthall and Old (2017), ‘changing farmers’ objectives and management style needs to be handled professionally’ (p. 56). With that in mind, we advocate that the services of a certified Farm Succession Facilitator, trained in accordance with an international best practice model, such as the one offered by the International Farm Transition Network in the U.S.A., is essential; particularly when facilitating discussions between old and young family members’ objectives, goals and expectations for the farm. In addition to being acutely aware and knowledgeable of the defence mechanisms and tactics utilized by the older generation to avoid and deter the delegation of managerial responsibilities from occurring identified in this study, we recommend that it is also essential for such professionals to be cognisant of the older generations’ emotional needs and cognitive insecurities about succession and retirement, since psychodynamic and sociodynamic deterrents constitute a major obstacle to the development of a plan for the future (Conway et al., 2016). Such understanding and knowledge will equip succession facilitators on the ground with the necessary credibility, skill, reverence and trust needed to personally engage with older farmers and ultimately strengthen their willingness to address the issue.

Intergenerational debates about collaborative working processes, professionally initiated and guided by a trained Farm Succession Facilitator, will allow for the succession process to be developed, based on a more logical than emotional perspective. We acknowledge that voluntary succession mediation service already exists in the Republic of Ireland. The role and indeed usefulness of mediation in the farm transfer planning process is also outlined in Teagasc’s Guide to Transferring the Family Farm (Teagasc, 2015). In many ways, facilitation and mediation are similar, but in the most elementary way, they are significantly different: mediation is generally seen as intervention in a dispute (e.g. in marriage separation or divorce) in order to bring about an agreement or reconciliation whereas facilitation is primarily used pre-conflict. Due to the potential negative and conflictual connotations associated with the term ‘mediation

service’, we suggest that the term ‘facilitation service’ is more appropriate for policy to use in a farm transfer planning context as it may promote a more positive and wilful attitude towards the process. Conway et al., (2016) note that the development of such strategies concerning the human dynamics of family farm transfer has the potential to greatly ease the stresses of the planning process.

According to Nuthall and Old (2017) however ‘farmers need a strong incentive to work on their style and objective factors which are holding back succession’ (P. 56). There must be a seed that stimulates the need to act. Therefore, instead of facilitation being a voluntary service available to farmers, this study recommends that existing and future policies and programmes encouraging family farm transfer and supporting younger farmers, insist on a course of mandatory facilitation sessions with a certified Farm Succession Facilitator, ideally funded or subsidised by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, in order to be eligible for any financial incentives on offer, such as capital tax exemptions and reliefs. Effective communication is vital in the farm transfer planning process and such an implementation has the potential to greatly enhance the uptake and success of existing and future policy measures. Furthermore, this study recommends that this compulsory facilitation requirement be extended beyond merely supporting those directly considering farm transfer and added as compulsory criteria for all younger farmers hoping to obtain an Advanced Level 6 Certificate in Agriculture (Green Cert) for example, that qualifies them for stock relief and stamp duty exemptions as ‘Young Trained Farmers’. This would stimulate and encourage open lines of intergenerational communication within family farm households, whether they are currently in the process of farm transfer planning or not, from an early stage, something that currently seems not to be the case.

As the future success of the family business may hinge on its ability to maintain internal stability, existing attitudes towards succession must change in order to make the transition between generations less problematic and more efficient. ‘To change the world’, Bourdieu (1990, p. 23) argues, one must change the ways of world making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced (ibid). A cultural shift on an age-old problem of farm succession requires well-informed and intelligent policy interventions and strategies such as the ones being proposed in this study. Furthermore, in recognition

of the heterogeneity of the farming population (Vanclay, 2004), the ideas presented here should not be viewed as ‘one size fits all model’ for ‘fixing’ the succession situation. Policy interventions must be geared to the individual circumstances and specific conditions of any given case, reiterating previous research (Lansberg, 1988; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Nuthall and Old, 2017). This may encourage the senior generation to approach the transition with greater enthusiasm and acceptance. Further, in-depth studies extending to family businesses in other sectors, using this approach, combined with Bourdieu’s framework and qualitative research can provide researchers and policy makers with a comprehensive picture of how to manage the features of authoritarianism wielded by senior generations. We believe that such a comprehensive investigation of ‘normal’ family life addresses this lacuna in family farm transfer literature and meets Bourdieu’s requirement that ‘the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality’ (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 2).

Chapter 7

Article 3

Chapter 7

Article 3: Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2017) Till death do us part: Exploring the farmer-farm relationship in later life through the lens of ‘Insideness’, International Journal of Agricultural Management. (under review).

Abstract

The senior generation’s unwillingness to relinquish managerial duties and retire is a globally recognized characteristic of intergenerational family farm transfer. This is despite the array of financial incentives put in place to stimulate and entice the process. Applying Rowles’ concept of ‘insideness’ as a theoretical framework, this paper brings into focus the suitability and appropriateness of previous and existing farm transfer policy strategies, by presenting an insightful, nuanced analysis of the deeply embedded attachment older farmers have with their farms, and how such a bond can stifle the necessary hand over of the farm business to the next generation. This research employs a multi-method triangulation design, consisting of a self-administered questionnaire and an Irish adaptation of the International FARMTRANSFERS Survey in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews, to generate a comprehensive insight into the intricate, multi-level farmer-farm relationship in later life. The overriding themes to emerge from the content analysis of the empirical research are farmer’s inherent desire to stay rooted in place in old age and also to maintain legitimate connectedness within the farming community by remaining active and productive on the farm. Additionally, there is a strong sense of nostalgia attributed to the farm, as it is found to represent a mosaic of the farmer’s achievements as well as being a landscape of memories. The paper concludes by suggesting that a greater focus on the farmer-farm relationship has the potential to finally unite farm transfer policy efforts with the mind-set of its targeted audience, after decades of disconnect.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The survival, continuity and future prosperity of the agricultural sector, traditional family farm model and broader sustainability of rural society ultimately depends on an age-diverse farming population. With a steady decline in the number of young farm families reported as being key in the demoralization of rural communities in which the farm is located (Ball and Wiley, 2005; Goeller, 2012), and the recent declaration by European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan, that a priority for future CAP reforms must focus on generational renewal (European Commission, 2017), it is increasingly clear that a major challenge presents itself in the area of intergenerational family farm transfer. Intergenerational family farm transfer, encompassing three separate yet interrelated processes of succession, retirement and inheritance (Gasson and Errington, 1993), is an integral facet of farm management. Present attempts however to confront the global demographic trend of an ageing farming population and a low level of land mobility (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Bogue, 2013; Chiswell, 2014; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015), requires substantial reconsideration.

This paper, drawing on Rowles' (1983) concept of 'insideness', contextualises the difficulty and reluctance to 'step aside' and retire from farming (Foskey, 2005; Lobley et al., 2010; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Fasina and Inegbedion, 2014) that continues to be the mainstay in many rural areas globally. The paper probes into the subjective experiences of farmers in Ireland as they reach retirement age and unearths a layer of understanding and attachment, both implicit and explicit, between farmer and farm, that we argue must be central to policies aimed at facilitating family farm intergenerational transfer. Reinforcing the urgency, is the realisation that this phenomenon has resulted in significant socio-economic challenges for young people aspiring to embark on a career in farming (Kirkpatrick, 2013), with adverse implications not only on the development trajectory of individual family farms but also the production efficiency and economic growth of the agri-food sector as a whole (ADAS, 2004; Hennessy and Rehman, 2007).

1.2 Theoretical Approach

Arguably, the seminal work in the field of place attachment and identity amongst rural elderly persons in later life is Rowles's (1983) concept of 'insiderness'. Rowles (1990) explains that insiderness involves 'an intimate involvement with a place that is grounded in personal history and qualitatively differentiates this place from space outside' (p. 107). The theory has three dimensions; physical, social and autobiographical, and although direct application of these concepts will be discussed in the results sections, it is instructive to define each here. Physical insiderness is created by an intimate awareness and knowledge of the physical environment where one lives. The second element, social insiderness, is created by being known and knowing others in the community as well as sharing community values. Autobiographical insiderness goes to a deeper level and represents the lived memories and essences of the place. Riley (2012) previously employed the concept of insiderness to explore the challenges and issues surrounding the occupational cessation and retirement relocation of retired farming couples in the United Kingdom, however there have been no studies carried out to date which have explicitly explored Rowles's three interrelated constructs of place attachment amongst older, active and productive members of the farming community. While it is acknowledged that the concept of insiderness does not cover every facet dictating the farm transfer decision-making process, it does contribute to identifying current needs and priorities within policy and research by providing insight into the subjective experience of farmers growing old on the farm, rather than relying solely on aggregate data. This aids in the interpretation of existing quantitative results in the field and thereby increases policy relevance.

1.3 Policy Interventions

In response to rigidity in the agrarian system, the policy environment in Ireland has explored various strategies of financially stimulating and enticing farm transfer over the past four decades. Little change however, in attitude amongst the older generation towards intergenerational transfer has come about to date (Gillmor, 1999; Bika, 2007; Leonard et al., 2017). Conway et al. (2016) argue that such policy measures were excessively preoccupied with financial incentives and have 'little or

no regard' for the older farmer's emotional welfare (p. 166). In particular, Conway et al., (ibid) strongly criticised the eligibility requirements for farmers entering the recent largely unsuccessful Early Retirement Scheme for farmers (ERS 3, June, 2007), which included a clause that stated that 'Persons intending to retire under the scheme shall cease agricultural activity forever' (DAFM, 2007). This type of language and sentiment was completely oblivious to the consciousness of many older farmers. Indeed Conway et al. (2016) found that the potential loss of one's lifelong accumulation of symbolic capital, with associated characteristics of identity, status, position and authority, upon transferring managerial control and retiring is a dilemma that farmers find difficult to accept and ultimately resist (ibid). Equally it could be argued that the lack of any great understanding of a farmer's psyche is also clearly visible in the various attempts to develop 'answers' usually in the form of tax or other initiatives or partnership agreements like Joint Farming Ventures (JFVs) for example. While there is merit in such structures, they do not, we would argue, fully grasp the enormity of a farmer's attachment to his/her farm. The JFVs and others including arrangements such as farm partnerships and share farming, have recently been promoted within Irish policy discourses as strategies that act as a stepping stone to successful farm transfer (DAFM, 2011; Hennessy, 2014). Ingram and Kirwan (2011) note however that while it appears that some older farmers are willing in principle to offer JFV arrangements, when it comes to the reality of 'handing over control (or partial control) of a business that they have been in charge of for perhaps 40 or 50 years' (p. 294) they are often reluctant to do so. In a similar way, Kirkpatrick's (2013) study in the USA also argued that 'in many cases the older farmers' sense of place and purpose attached to the family farm' supersedes any fiscal incentives that encourages 'the handing over of the family farm to the next generation' (p. 4).

Consequently, if tax incentive schemes, JFVs or partnership arrangements are unable to progress the desire for generational renewal on the farm, what are the obstructions that continue to frustrate or delay the process and how might these be addressed? It is to this and the concept of farmer-farm attachment that we now consider.

1.4 Farmer-farm attachment

This paper brings into focus the suitability and appropriateness of previous and existing farm transfer policy strategies, by generating a comprehensive insight into the deeply embedded relationship older farmers have with their farms; emulating Shucksmith and Hermann's (2002), contention of the need to examine 'farmers' own ways of seeing the world' (p. 39). While Conway et al.'s (2016) research into the human side of farm transfer identified the complex psychodynamic and sociodynamic factors that influence the farm transfer decision-making process, existing research in the field has yet to thoroughly describe or explain the level of emotional attachment placed on the family farm and its embodied contents (i.e. land, farmhouse, livestock). These 'embodied contents' are often developed over several generations, and as such the bond created often affects the older farmer's ability to deal with and accept the inevitable challenges and changes brought about by the 'twin process' of succession and retirement. It is therefore argued here that an in-depth understanding and knowledge of farmer-farm attachment is necessary and will aid in the modification of existing policies and/or the development of novel strategies that sensitively deal with problematic issues surrounding intergenerational farm transfer. Perhaps most importantly of all is the contention of this research that in fully understanding the farmer-farm connection and allowing this to inform the type of decisions being made, this will not only enable greater intergenerational transfers to take place but more significantly will help secure the well-being of farmers as they age.

Furthermore, given that farm succession is often less than satisfactory (Burton and Fischer 2015) and that there seems to be a cultural expectation that 'farmers don't retire' (Conway et al., 2016, p. 172), this paper has global relevance and will be of particular interest to countries throughout the European Union where the age profile of the farming community and the rate of succession and retirement have been matters of concern and unease for decades (Commins and Kelleher 1973; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Bika, 2007; Zagata and Sutherland, 2015). The next section presents the methodological approach employed, while thereafter the empirical evidence is used to explore the 'farmers' own ways of seeing the world' (Shucksmith and Hermann's 2002, p. 39). The latter part of the paper expands on this evidence and examines potential pathways that we argue should inform those

policy makers and key stakeholders who have the means and ability to deliver interventions.

2. Methodology

This research employs a multi-method triangulation design used by Conway et al., (2016), in conjunction with a preliminary exploration of data obtained from an Irish adaptation of the International FARMTRANSFERS Survey in an attempt to obtain a complete picture of the intricate, multi-level farmer-farm attachment in later life and the suitability of previous farm transfer policy strategies. A detailed survey was initially undertaken with 324 farmers aged 55 and over in attendance at a series of ‘Transferring the Family Farm’ clinics (TFFC) hosted by Teagasc (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland) to investigate the attitudes and behavioural intentions of the farming community towards succession and retirement. The reasoning for specifically focussing on farmers aged 55 and over is that one of the terms and conditions for farmers intending to retire under the 2007 Early Retirement Scheme (ERS 3) was that participants must have been ‘between his/her 55th and 66th birthday’ to be eligible (DAFM, 2007). Over 2,800 farmers attended these clinics held at 11 different locations throughout the Republic of Ireland in September and October 2014. 60% (n=194) of questionnaire respondents also gave their consent to be interviewed in more depth at a later date.

In order to validate, strengthen reliability and build on the data gathered at the TFFC, the second phase of data collection involved a list of copyright questions derived from the International FARMTRANSFERS Survey, refined for Irish conditions, being included in the 2016 Land Use/Mobility Farm Survey conducted by Teagasc. Lobley and Baker (2012) explain that the FARMTRANSFERS project is an international collaborative effort around a common research instrument that ‘yields a range of (largely quantitative) data relating to the pattern, process and speed of succession and retirement which provides a firm base for future inquiries utilising different methodologies’ (p. 15). To date, the survey has been replicated in 10 countries and 7 states in the U.S.A. and completed by over 15,600 farmers throughout the world (ibid). The FARMTRANSFERS data collected from a

stratified random sample of 309 farmers aged 51 and over included in the 2016 Land Use/Mobility Farm Survey and Choice Experiment analysis, representing over 80,000 farms nationally, combined with the 43,000 invitations sent out by Teagasc to each of their farmer clients to attend the TFFC, provides a thoroughly comprehensive nationally representative sample of the Irish farming population across a broad spectrum of farming operations, typologies, geographical location and scale.

The next phase of data collection involved a Problem-Centred Interview (PCI) approach, to peel back the layers and broaden the two farmer survey responses and in doing so, inform possible new policies. Witzel (2000) explains that PCI can be combined with questionnaires in order to ‘solve the problems arising in connection with samples and to relate the results generated by different procedures’ (p. 3). Following frequency distribution and cross-tabulation analysis of aggregate data obtained at the TFFC and the FARMTRANSFERS survey on the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme, in conjunction with an additional review of relevant literature in the field, it was possible to draw up a specific PCI guideline containing preformulated questions on the issues that were identified to be subjectively significant to the sample farming population. A 10% (n=19) sample of farmers recruited at the TFFC for the interview phase of data collection were sourced using a systematic sampling technique (see Table 7.1) and subsequently interviewed from May until August 2015.

Pseudo Name	Gender	Age	Farming Enterprise	Regional Location	Considered Retirement	Succession Plan
Frank	Male	57	Mixed livestock	West	Yes	Yes
Luke	Male	69	Mixed Livestock	West	Maybe	No
Dominic	Male	77	Mixed Livestock	West	Maybe	No
Rory	Male	66	Sheep	West	No	No
Andrew	Male	64	Beef	West	Maybe	No
David	Male	70	Beef	North West	Maybe	No
Thomas	Male	80	Sheep and Tillage	North West	Yes	No
Sean	Male	75	Dairy and Poultry	North East	No	No
Mark	Male	61	Dairy	East	No	Yes
Claire	Female	82	Mixed Livestock and Tillage	East	No	No
Josh	Male	70	Tillage (Crop Production)	South East	Yes	No
Jack	Male	72	Dairy	South East	No	No
Ian	Male	67	Dairy	South	No	No
John	Male	70	Mixed Livestock	South	No	No
Colm	Male	71	Mixed Livestock	South West	No	Yes
Eimear	Female	65	Beef	South West	No	No
Brian	Male	85	Dairy	Midlands	Yes	No
Richard	Male	67	Beef	Midlands	Yes	No
Aoife	Female	68	Mixed Livestock	Midlands	No	No

Table 7.1: Interviewees' Details

Given the personal nature of the issues under investigation the use of individual face-to-face interviews in the homes of the respondents was deemed the most appropriate means of obtaining information. The interviews lasted up to 2.5 hours and were recorded, transcribed verbatim and assigned pseudonyms to protect participant's privacy. Content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was used to analyse the data collected and identify categories and themes. Relevant quotes from the interviews were then integrated into the various themes in order to support particular findings.

3. Results and Discussion

The presented findings are the result of a triangulation of quantitative survey data and complimentary qualitative Problem-Centred Interviews maintaining the same foci. Findings from both the TFFC and FARMTRANSFERS survey reveal that there is a significant cohort of farmers in Ireland that do not plan to retire from

farming in the future (see Table 7.2). Of those who are open to the idea, Conway et al. (2016) previously identified the ‘divergence of opinion and uncertainty between retirement expectations and retirement realisations, resulting in the decision to retire being difficult to execute and follow through’ (p. 170). This finding is consistent with psychological research, showing that attitudes are not necessarily related to behaviours (e.g., Ajzen, 1991).

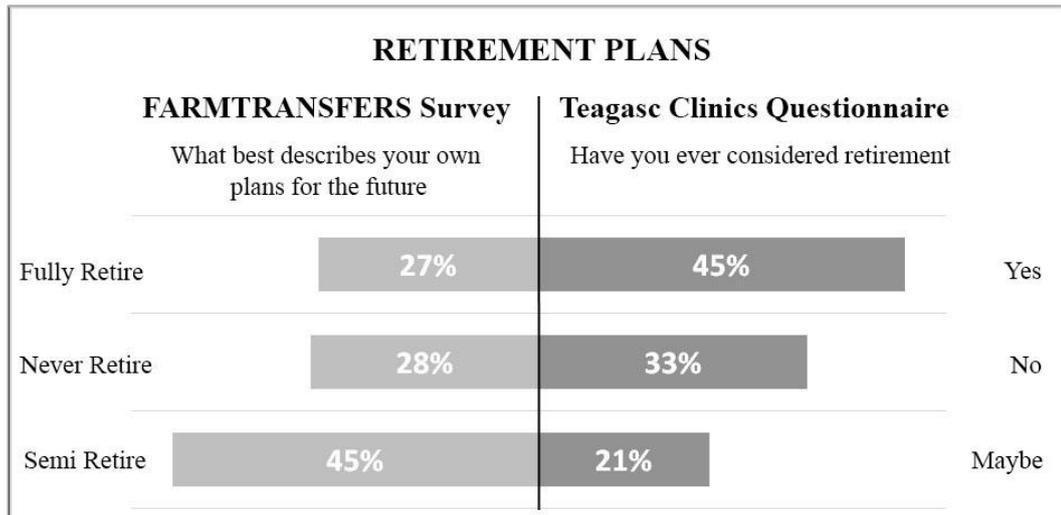


Table 7.2: Retirement Plans

Correlating survey findings also illustrate that there is a substantial percentage of farmers who have identified a successor (see Table 7.3), signifying a resurgence in demand from young people for a career in farming, resulting in an anticipated renaissance in agriculture (Chiswell, 2014) and, by extension, a rejuvenation of rural life (Teagasc, 2011; Goeller, 2012; Marcus, 2013).

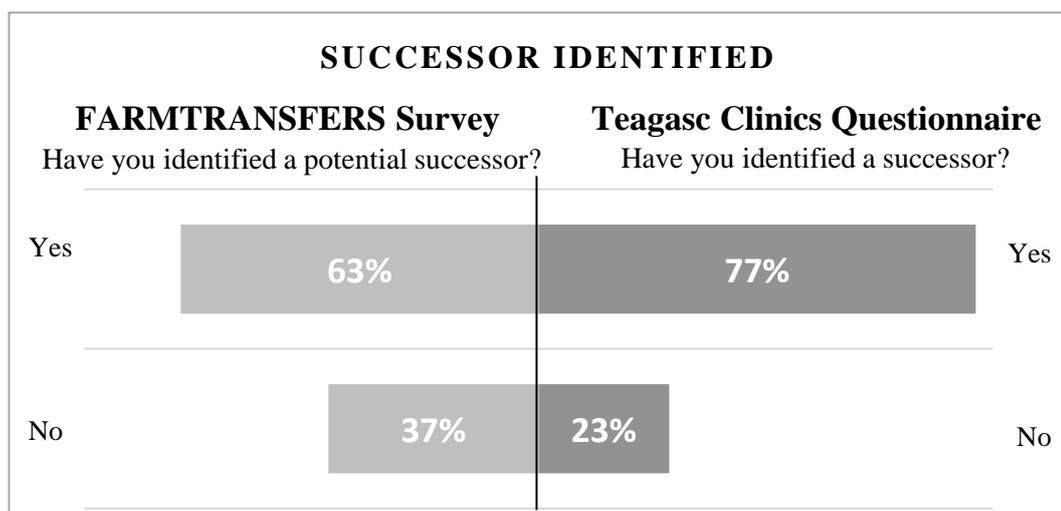


Table 7.3: Successor Identified

Interviews identified however that farmers are ill prepared for succession with 84% of participants not having a succession plan in place (see Table 1). This finding is analogous with results obtained from the nationally representative sample of farmers surveyed in the FARMTRANSFERS survey which found that 67% do not have a succession plan in place. Moreover, 40% of FARMTRANSFERS respondents were found to not even have a will in place. Kimhi and Lopez (1999) previously highlighted that succession planning is unpopular within the farming community and therefore rarely occurs while the older generation is still alive, resulting in significant difficulties for the successor in waiting to integrate and evolve into a more formidable role in family farm business (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Gasson and Errington (1993) argue that the older farmers must be aware of the needs of the next generation and relinquish ownership rights of the farm to ensure continued involvement and interest in the family farm business. If this is not the case, the farmer runs the risk of not having a successor at all because the younger generation may go in search of alternative employment elsewhere in order to achieve their career ambitions and personal development (Kimhi and Lopez, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 2013) resulting in potentially good young farmers being lost to the agricultural sector (Nuthall and Old, 2017). Such a potentially detrimental phenomenon, requires urgent attention. Taking into account the senior generation's opinions and feelings towards farm transfer policy strategies however, 88% of TFFC questionnaire respondents agree that 'policy makers and practitioners need to have a better understanding of the world as farmers see it'. Winter (1997) previously highlighted that 'for too long the policy debate has been conducted with little reference to farmers or to their view of the world' (p. 377). Furthermore, 88% of farmers surveyed at the TFFC who have not considered retiring from farming in the future agree that 'the lifestyle quality from being a farmer is far greater than any financial incentive to leave farming.' When asked more specifically about the suitability of the terms and conditions of the 2007 ERS 3, interviews reveal that there exists a clear disconnect between such policy measures and the mind-set of respondents:

'Ceasing all farming activity was a ridiculous rule. It was almost as if you couldn't even own a pair of wellingtons anymore and that is crazy. A lot of the rules and regulations

brought into farming here in Ireland tend to be half baked’.
(Josh)

‘Asking farmers to stop farming forever was very much a very backward step, because I think it would end up creating depression amongst farmers. Cutting a farmer adrift from their farm at that stage of their life would leave them in a very lonely place’. (Frank)

‘I thought that last retirement scheme was a disaster. I mean requesting that we couldn’t do bits and pieces around our farms, it was bureaucracy gone mad. It was a no brainer that it wouldn’t work and whoever came up with that scheme hadn’t a clue about farming. We are talking about a way of life here, how could we be expected to cease agricultural activity forever?’. (Colm)

These findings indicate that it is imperative that existing and future policies and programmes encouraging intergenerational farm transfer take into account the emotional value attached to the farm and farming occupation ‘beyond the economic’ (Pile,1990, p. 147). The overriding themes of farmer-farm attachment to emerge from the content analysis of the empirical research were (i) rooted in place (ii) legitimate connectedness and (iii) sense of nostalgia. These themes will now be discussed in the next sections, to provide a detailed insight into the level of insideness that the older generation of the farming community attach to their farm.

3.1 Rooted in Place

Results from the empirical research illustrate the deep-rooted familiarity farmers have with their farms. Exploring the interplay between people and place within agriculture, Gray (1999) previously used the phrase ‘being at home on the hills’ to capture ‘the special, sensual and intimate attachment people feel towards the hills in which they spend so much time, a feeling of being in their proper place’ (p. 441). Such a close acquaintanceship was evident from the TFFC survey results, with 92% of respondents agreeing that they spend most of their time at home on their farms.

The motif of insideness is appropriate here as it suggests that older people develop an intense sense of familiarity and belonging in their home environment late in life, which is notably distinct from the outside world (ibid). When asked what their lives would be like if they no longer lived on the farm, interviewees found it hard to visualise what this might be like or that it might ever happen, for example:

'I can't see myself retiring and heading off to Costa Brava or the likes of for the rest of my life, oh no, I certainly can't. I find that when I go away somewhere on holidays for a few days with my wife, that I'd be anxious to get back to the farm, I'd be really missing it you see. I suppose I am kind of institutionalised on the farm at this stage... I'd be way out of my depth living somewhere else'. (Andrew)

'I know the older we get, we might not be able to look after ourselves, or the mind might go and then of course you'd have to be shipped off to a nursing home, but while I am alive and well I'm staying put on the farm. You see if it is somewhere where you have been born and lived all your life, it's hard not to be hugely attached to the place, it's part of who I am now, I don't want to be anywhere else'. (David)

These findings illustrate that the older generation have become almost 'physiologically melded' into the farm environment over time (Rowles, 1984, p. 146). Such rootedness is referred to as physical insideness (Rowles, 1983a). This innate intimacy or 'body awareness' (Rowles and Ravdal, 2002) of the farm space, is also found to equip farmers with an intricate understanding of the environmental conditions and limitations of their land, confirming previous research (Gray, 1998; Burton, 2004; Yarwood and Evans, 2006; Burton et al., 2008).

'I know this place like the back of my hand. My father lord rest him taught me all he knew about the farm and my son now looks up to me to teach him all I know. I know all the fields that need an extra bit of slurry in the spring and what fields are best to fatten the bullocks over the summer. No books or computers can teach you things like that. The point

I am trying to make is you cannot underestimate a lifetime of experience on the farm'. (Luke)

These findings suggest that the criteria of previous early retirement schemes (ERS 3), which stressed that 'continued participation in farming is not permitted' (DAFM, 2007), may in fact have had negative effects on farm performance by creating critical shortages of experienced personnel who hold an invaluable store of locally specific lay and tacit knowledge developed over years of regularized interaction and experience working on the farm (Conway et al., 2016). Interviews also identified that the idiosyncratic 'rhythms, routines, and rituals' (Rowles et al., 2003, p. 172) of farm life, shaped and internalised by the daily and seasonal labour intensive demands of working on the farm, fosters a heightened sense of physical insideness for the older generation:

'I'm always working the land. I'd be spreading fertilizer and fixing fences and bringing the cows in and out of the milking parlour twice a day. I hope to spend the rest of my days keeping busy on the farm... at least while I am fit and able to do so'. (Jack)

'In a way, you are pretty much married to the farm... because you can't just decide that you are going to take off for six weeks and walk around Borneo or the Himalayas, no, no, there's always work to be done on the farm, 365 days a year'. (Josh)

Riley (2011) previously explained that integrating with and tending to the needs of animals plays a central role in organizing and structuring the day-to-day and annual lives of farmers, with many claiming that such tasks are what 'they got out of bed for' (p. 23). Glover (2011) add that the farm represents 'who the farmer is' (p. 9). The cessation of occupational engagement upon retirement however 'not only left voids in terms of time and empty routine structures, but also the loss of a lens through which they channelled very particular understandings of, and relationships with, specific places and practices' (Riley, 2011, p. 23). Riley (2012) also noted that retirees felt 'lost' upon ceasing their 'association with, and everyday routines and actions within', the farm space (p. 770). Interviews identified that the

familiarity and habitual routines within the farm setting also offers therapeutic benefits to older farmers:

'Space is the most wonderful thing in the world to have. If there was something or another bothering me, I find there is nothing better than to just walk up the fields early in the morning or late in the evening, and look back across the land, and watch all my lovely cattle grazing and thriving... your head would be a lot clearer after that'. (Aoife)

'I love every inch of this place, it makes me feel good. I love being able to walk through the fields, checking on my crops and just enjoying the nature all around me, it's quite therapeutic for me in fact. As I have lived here my whole life I probably take it for granted sometimes just how special it really is'. (Josh)

Rossier (2012) previously noted that keeping active on the farm may 'improve the quality of life, and serve to create meaning' (p. 84), while Price and Conn (2012) add that farmers 'engage with animals and nature in a spatial arena where legacy, culture belonging home and work are intertwined' (p. 95). The general satisfaction and well-being that elderly farmers attribute to the 'physical insideness' of the farm space (Riley, 2012), offers potential for understanding why many are unwilling to recognize or accept their physical limitations on the farm (Peters et al., 2008) and instead, continue to traverse spaces that would appear to be beyond their level of physiological competence (Ponzetti, 2003), with subsequent risks to their health and safety. Such a phenomenon requires immediate policy intervention, as almost half of all farm fatalities in Ireland and many other European Union member states involve farmers aged 65 and over (HSA, 2013).

3.2 Legitimate Connectedness

Research findings also reveal that the farm provides the farmer with a sense of legitimate social connectedness within the farming community. 78% of questionnaire respondents at the TTFC agree that farming provides them with a

sense of belonging and a position in society. Riley (2012) explains that ‘just as the boundaries of work, home and leisure are often indivisible on the farm, so too are the nature of social interactions taking place there’, as they are woven into the everyday activities and routines of the farm (p. 770). Furthermore, 71% of TFFC questionnaire respondents also agree with the notion that farming is not only their job, but also their lifestyle, pastime and social outlet. Interviews reveal the manner in which the farm and its practices provides a fulcrum around which social interactions can take place:

‘I became more and more involved in various farming organisations and activities in the area when my husband, lord have mercy on him, passed away. The farm ties me in with these groups you see, we are all farmers there, we have a common ground. I find that it’s great to mix with like-minded people on an on-going basis... it has helped me cope with his loss in a way’. (Eimear)

‘I don’t do anything else only farm and go to the local mart once or twice a week. Even if I’m not selling or buying sheep I’d still go to the mart, I enjoy the social aspect of it you see. I always go into the canteen when I’m at the mart and sit down and have a chat with the lads about farming and the weather.... things like that’. (Rory)

‘I have been actively involved in breeding Texel sheep on the farm for the last 30 years. I love the buzz out of breeding, finding the next big thing at the pedigree sales, meeting and competing with the other breeders for prizes... ah it’s a great pastime to have as well as everything else’. (Frank)

Rowles’s (1983) concept of ‘social insideness’, which is fostered and developed through ‘everyday social exchanges and relationships’ and ‘a sense of being well known and knowing others’ (Burns et al., 2012, p. 3) is evident here. Social Insideness provides farmers with a sense of belonging by allowing them to integrate and become a part of the ‘social fabric of the community’ (Rowles, 1983a, p. 302),

thus enhancing their emotive attachment to the farm in old age. Social insideness is considered to be particularly significant in later life, as one may need to draw on these long-term relationships for help and social support if they happen to experience age related physical impairments and disabilities (Ponzetti, 2003; Riley, 2012). Sutherland and Burton (2011) previously noted that farmers feel that they can ‘count on the neighbour in an emergency’ (p. 246). Research findings also illustrate the considerable social significance attributed to being approved and recognised as a ‘good farmer’ in a community of like-minded farmers, reiterating previous research (Burton; 2004; Burton et al., 2008). 71% of respondents at the TFFC agreed that it was important to be viewed as an active and productive farmer amongst their peers to maintain their status in the farming community with Glover (2011) pointing to the fact that a ‘farmer’s status is measured in the size and production levels of the farm’ (p. 7). The perceived loss of social insideness and the subsequent hiatus brought about by retirement is brought to light in the following interview extracts:

‘It would certainly be a shock to the system not to be dairy farming anymore. It would be hard not to see the milk lorry driving into the yard in the mornings... and if I was no longer able to talk the same talk with other dairy farmers about milk yields, butterfat and protein and all that. I’d hate to be out of the loop so that’s why I need to stay in touch and continue dairying with my son’. (Brian)

‘I feel very much part of the farming community here... ah there really is a great group of farmers in our area. We are also involved in a few Teagasc discussion groups around here. I think they are a great idea to thrash out ideas with farmers similar to yourself and also for the social aspect too of course. That’s why it is important to stay actively involved in farming, otherwise you’d be cut adrift from these sorta things’. (John)

These findings illustrate that it is almost impossible to untangle a farmer’s everyday social interactions from their farms. Riley (2012) previously explained that the

‘indivisibility of social and occupational spaces’ within the farming community however, leaves farmers feeling isolated or like ‘an outsider’ within previously ‘familiar and comfortable spaces’ following retirement (p. 769). The perceived loss of legitimate social insideness brought about by retirement, is reported to be even more pronounced for those who are unable to draw on successors in connecting to these spaces (ibid). More specifically, Riley (2011) found that the commonality of owning and tending to animals are essential requirements to be a ‘proper’ part of livestock-related gatherings, such as auctions and agricultural shows. The lack of active and corporeal engagement with livestock upon ‘stepping aside’ from the farm however, irrevocably changes the nature of these pre-existing settings of social inclusion (ibid). Conway et al. (2016) also noted that many older farmers believed that they would be seen or perceived differently by other farmers if they became a ‘retired farmer’. The farm thus provides an arena in which the older generation can preserve their legitimacy as an active and productive farmer in society in later life.

3.3 Sense of Nostalgia

A farmer’s relationship with their farm extends beyond the physical setting and social milieu to represent a space and environment that has ‘a temporal depth of meaning’ (Rowles, 1983a, p. 303). 82% of farmers surveyed at the TFFC could trace their family’s occupancy of the farm back two generations or more, a finding previously identified by Potter and Lobley (1996) who noted that farming tends to be ‘the most hereditary of professions’ (p. 286). Furthermore, findings from the TFFC found that 87% of farmers surveyed think that ‘it is important that their farm stays in their family's ownership in the future’. The temporal aspect of the farmer-farm based relationship is reflected in Rowles’s (1983) notion of autobiographical insideness. Often unspoken and taken for granted, autobiographical insideness is developed through acquisition of place-associated memories of significant life experiences, relationships and events in one’s personal history (Rowles, 1993) which offers ‘a sense of familiarity, connection and self-identity’ in old age (Riley, 2012, p. 764). Interviews reveal that the ancestral lineage of the farm, passed down through generations, provide farmers with an ingrained sense of autobiographical insideness as custodians of their family’s land in its present history:

'I inherited the place here from my father, just like he did from his father before. You are tied into a long family history when you are brought up on a farm you see. But I am only a spoke in the wheel of this farm's story, I am only a caretaker, so I hope to hand it over to my son one day and fingers crossed it stays in the family forever more after that'. (David)

Price and Conn (2012) explain that farmers have 'a desire to maintain the farm in the family as a result of feelings of responsibility to past generations' (p. 100). The farm therefore is not just a piece of land or a workplace (Burton, 2004), but rather 'the physical manifestation of generations of knowledge; knowledge developed and used over time' (Gill, 2013, p. 79) by both the farmer themselves and by those who have lived and worked there before (Glover, 2011). The inherent desire not to keep the farm in the family is evident in findings from the FARMTRANSFERS survey which found that only 4% of respondent's 'desired succession and inheritance outcome' was to 'sell the farm to divide assets equally'. Irish farmer's profound historical connection to their land is aptly illustrated in the following extract taken from world-renowned author and playwright John B. Keane's play in 1965 entitled 'The Field': 'I watched this field for forty years and my father before me watched it for forty more. I know every rib of grass and every thistle and every whitethorn bush that bounds it'. This captivating portrait of the deeply embedded attachment to farmland in rural Ireland in the mid-20th century, remains relevant to this day (Banovic, et al., 2015), with less than 1% of the total land area in Ireland put on the open market annually (Hennessy, 2006; Irish Farmers Journal, 2012). Findings from the TFFC questionnaire confirm such a bond, with 88% respondents agreeing that they 'have an emotional/sentimental attachment to their land and animals'. More specifically, interview conversations reveal the nature of such intricate relationships:

'You form an attachment to the animals in the sense that you know how to live with every single one of them, they all have their own temperament and personality you see. I know the one's that will come to the gate first when they see me coming and I'd be able to tell straight away if any of

them were sick or off form... so you see I need to check on my stock every day, every single day without exception. I'd be lost without them and they wouldn't survive without me, it's as simple as that'. (Luke)

'I can still remember the dairy cows that we had when I was 6 or 7 years of age... I can remember them all dripping milk as they walked into the old parlour we had on the farm. ... We had a couple of Kerrys, a few Shorthorns, three Ayrshires, oh and a couple of Jerseys for the butter fat, so there was a good mix of breeds there. I remember them all, fond memories indeed... those very cows are the foundation of the fantastic wee herd we have on our farm today'. (Brian)

The level of emotional attachment that farmers place on their farm and animals was previously brought to light by Glover (2010) who highlighted the extremely distressing experiences of farmers who had lost their entire dairy herds in the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease crisis. Riley (2011) explains that a dairy herd not only acts 'as biographical markers through which farmers may narrate not only their own life' (p. 25) but it also represents an embodiment of the farm history, 'with the efforts and achievements of several generations inscribed upon them' (p. 21). Similarly, Gray (1998) pointed to how sheep farmers in the Scottish Borders invested considerable time establishing flocks whose 'characteristics embody the natural qualities of the ground on which they graze' (p. 351) through decades of selective breeding on their farm. Consequently, such distinctive breeding skills and practices define the personhood and lifetime's work of the farmer (ibid), which in turn, adds further to their personal accumulation of symbolic capital (Conway et al., 2016). 87% of questionnaire respondents at the TFFC agree that the farm represents years of hard work and what they have managed to achieve over their lifetime. Interviews reveal that the farm is a central site of autobiographical insideness as it represents a mosaic of the farmer's achievements as well as being a landscape of memories:

'Myself and my wife have been farming here for the last 34 years. We came from very humble beginnings and we make a lot of strides here through the years. We take pride in the fact that we have built slatted sheds, reclaimed land, picked stones, moved ditches, put in fences, dug out roadways and established a good herd of cows. We have left our mark on the farm, just like my own father and mother did'. (Ian)

Riley (2012) previously noted the 'emotional challenge of 'ending the line there' (p. 774). This is especially the case when a successor is not in situ to take over the farm (ibid). Research findings indicate that the deep-seated sense of autobiographical attachment older farmers have with their farms can override and stifle various collaborative farming policy efforts aiming to facilitate land mobility from one generation to the next. This reluctance to 'let go' and/or alter the status quo of the farm is explained by Ingram and Kirwan (2011) who explain that the older generation are 'clearly attached to their farms, having put a lot of effort and investment over the years into building up the business' (p. 295) and are therefore reluctant to 'let go' and/or alter the status quo of the farm:

'Unfortunately, we have no one to take over from us though so we will be looking to lease out some of the land soon. But I would hate for someone to come in and mess it all up. Oh that would be a huge disappointment, so we will be having a damn good look at the way the person who wants to lease our land looks after their farm first before we'd even consider leasing it to them'. (Ian)

Ambivalence towards the succession process is also evident in the U.S.A., with programmes encouraging farm transfer reporting that they have 'approximately 20 beginning farmers for every existing farmer' (Whitehead et al., 2012, p. 216). Price and Conn (2012) explain however that there is 'something about growing up on the farm that leads farmers to often imbue a sense of pride of being born to farm, a sense of destiny, of it being in their blood and this is clearly hard to pull away from' (p. 105).

4. Conclusion

This paper has probed more broadly than any previous research the understandings of farmer-farm relationships in later life. As the average age of the farming population is increasing worldwide, this investigation is very timely. The significant contribution of this paper to the literature lies in its empirical insights, which demonstrate the appropriateness of utilizing the three dimensions of Rowles's (1983a) concept of insideness; physical, social and autobiographical, in bringing into focus the level of attachment older farmers place on their farms, and how such a bond can stifle the necessary hand over of the farm business to the next generation.

The prominent themes of rooted in place, legitimate connectedness and a sense of nostalgia, that emerge from the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, illustrate that farming is more than an economic activity. The so-called 'soft issues' i.e. the emotional issues, identified in this research, are the issues that distort and dominate the older generation's decisions on the future trajectory of the farm. Such issues have resulted in intractable challenges for succession and retirement policy over the past forty years. These really are the 'hard issues'. As every farmer and farm is somewhat unique, this study acknowledges that there are no uniform or easily prescribed solutions to resolving this complex conundrum. However, we do advocate that family farm policy makers and practitioners re-examine their dominant focus on economic-based incentives and become more aware and knowledgeable of the intrinsic farmer-farm relationship identified in this study. This we argue will be crucial when reforming and developing future initiatives and strategies that seek to encourage the transfer of farm process by rightly considering interventions that maintain the quality of life of those concerned. Conway et al. (2016) previously noted the development of strategies 'concerning the human dynamics of family farm transfer (had) the potential to greatly ease the stresses of the process' (p. 174). More fundamentally still, we recommend that a concerted effort is made to provide extension advisory specialists on the ground with supplementary training in 'facilitation / communication' skills, in addition to their current 'technical' orientation. Such an understanding of the intrinsic link to farm attachment in old age will particularly equip these professionals with the necessary

credibility, skill and reverence needed to empathise with elderly farmers and their individual needs. Furthermore, such an insight into the senior generation's sense of insiderness on the farm, will provide health and safety professionals with an invaluable understanding and knowledge of the various actions taken by (or should be taken by) older farmers to handle age-related physical limitations and barriers on their farms.

In addition, as there are no bodies or services currently in existence in Ireland that specifically represent the needs and interests of the older farmers in rural areas, we suggest that a national voluntary organisation, is established that represents the needs of the senior generation of the farming community, equivalent to that of younger people in rural Ireland i.e. Macra na Feirme. Suited to the older generation's own interests and needs identified in this research, (and by Conway et al., 2016), such a voluntary organisation, funded annually by the Government and through membership, would provide the older generation with a fulcrum around which they can remain embedded 'inside' their farms and social circles in later life. A nationwide voluntary organisation, with a network of clubs in every county across the country, would allow older farmers to integrate within the social fabric of a local age peer group, whilst also providing them with opportunities to develop a pattern of farming activities suited to advancing age. This would contribute to their overall sense of insiderness, and, therefore, sense of self-worth, amidst the gradual diminishment of their physical capacities on the farm in later life. Collaborating with their younger counterparts in Macra na Feirme on various campaigns and activities would also allow the senior generation to retain a sense of purpose and value in old age. Similar to Macra na Feirme, this body for older farmers, with their added wealth of experience, would act as a social partner farm organisation together with the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) for example, that would allow this generation to have regular access to government ministers and senior civil servants, thus providing them with a voice to raise issues of concern. Indeed, such a group could be invaluable with regard to the development of future farm transfer strategies that would truly be cognisant of the human side of the process of intergenerational renewal. An established organisation for older farmers would also allow this sector of society to have a representative on important committees such as the Board of Teagasc, similar to their younger counterparts.

Finally, although this study is limited to Ireland, its association with the International FARMTRANSFERS project, provides a solid database upon which future research can begin to build. Indeed, such is the complexity of the farmer and farming traditions that a multi-layered picture comparing farmer's succession and retirement plans, with patterns obtained from other participating countries would be invaluable. Difficulties around intergenerational family farm transfer is not unique to any one country but is recognised at all levels, national, EU and beyond. Consequently, it is hoped that this analysis, while reflecting the Irish experience, will begin a much broader conversation on farmers, their place, view, concerns and challenges in the context of the future prosperity of the agricultural sector and ultimately the future sustainability of rural families, communities and environments on which we all depend. A greater focus on the farmer-farm relationship has the potential to finally unite farm transfer policy efforts with the mind-set of its targeted audience, after decades of disconnect.

Chapter 8

General Discussion

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8.1 Research Findings

Empirical findings from this article-based thesis indicate that the senior generation's reluctance and indeed resistance to alter the status quo of the existing management and ownership structure of the family farm is undoubtedly strong within the farming community. The reasons why older farmers fail to plan effectively and expeditiously for the future are expansive and range from the potential loss of identity, status and power that may occur as a result of engaging in the process, to the intrinsic multi-level relationship farmers have with their farms. The common denominator however, identified in this study, is that intergenerational family farm transfer is about emotion. The central role of the human dynamics involved can override and stifle various collaborative farming policy efforts aimed at facilitating land mobility from one generation to the next. This conundrum, to a great extent, has only been given due recognition in recent years and as such future interventions and research geared specifically towards the needs and wants of the senior generation of the farming community is greatly warranted.

8.1.1 Psychodynamic and Sociodynamic Emotions

Previous research has only cursorily dealt with the complex emotional and social challenges facing ageing farmers. This study has identified the value of applying Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital in comprehending the underlying psychodynamic and sociodynamic emotions governing the attitudes and behaviour patterns of older farmers facing the 'twin process' of succession and retirement. Using this concept, with associated characteristics of honour, prestige, recognition, and position (Bourdieu, 2000), it has been highlighted that the decision-making process of the older farmer does not always adhere to the economic school of thought, largely due to emotional ties to the farm and farming occupation. The

thought of being ‘retired’ was particularly difficult for older farmers to come to terms with. For many, identity and self-esteem are strongly attributed to their occupation. The prospect of sacrificing one’s professional and personal identity on handing over responsibility of the farm to the next generation and retiring is therefore a reality that the older generation find difficult to accept. As the senior generation's symbolic capital appears to be founded not only on their past achievements but also on present production, farmers also resist ‘stepping aside’ on the basis of an anticipated loss of social status that has accompanied their position as an active and productive farmer. In fact, there appears to be a cultural expectation within the farming community that ‘farmers don’t retire’. Those who do retire are generally perceived to have a defeatist attitude or do so as they have no option due to ill health. The older generation also resist handing over responsibility of the farm to the next generation because they revel in the socially recognized and approved authority attached to their hierarchical position as head of the family farm, from which symbolic power can be legitimately exercised (Swartz, 2013). The findings of this study also bring added credence to the perception that policy is ‘underestimating the importance of symbolic capital’ when discussing the issue of intergenerational family farm transfer.

8.1.2 Farm Household Micro-Politics and Management Power Dynamics

Empirical findings from this study indicate that the policy challenge to mobilize and support unconventional Joint Farming Ventures (JFVs), such as farm partnerships, is not straightforward due to the micro-politics and management power dynamics at play within family farm households. By virtue of the symbolic capital associated with elder status and gerontocratic power as the ‘boss farmer’ in the farm household, the older generation often exert symbolic violence on their successor by employing a hidden but potent mix of defence mechanisms and tactics, delivered through everyday channels of communication and cognition.

The overriding strategies and practices of symbolic violence to emerge from this study were elderly farmer’s efforts to continually reiterate their indispensability to

the daily management and operation of the family farm, thus giving their dominant position and authority within the farm household an entrenched legitimacy. This self-reinforcing aura of importance enables the older generation to become the purveyors of beliefs, narratives and ideologies that a reduction in involvement from farming and particularly retirement would bring detrimental consequences onto their personal health and emotional well-being. Asymmetric power relations within farm households is also found to be sustained through unilateral acts of generosity and gift giving from old to young. This disguised strategy of power exercised by the senior generation camouflages domination with a semblance of gratuity. Empirical findings also highlighted the contradictory and conflicting desires of the senior generation in relation to family farm transfer. Even those in the process of or who had already planned for succession resist 'fading into the background' and instead move to reassert their authority and centrality on the farm, thus forcing the younger generation to work under a 'generational shadow'.

The fact that symbolic violence operates not as an external coercive power, but rather in an insidious, often imperceptible manner, means that the internally constrained power relations identified in this study, rendered invisible by a process of naturalization within farm households, could easily be overlooked in a study of intergenerational farm transfer. Adopting this novel approach has unpacked and deconstructed the older generation's authoritarian narratives and actions, employed to perpetuate and safeguard their hierarchical position and privileges on the farm across generations. In doing so, this study challenges assertions that Bourdieu's theories are too abstract to have any empirical value (Jones, 2015), by bridging the gap between symbolic violence as a theory and its manifestation in farm family relationships.

8.1.3 Farmer-Farm Relationship

Another fundamental aspect affecting the older generation's ability to deal with and accept the inevitable challenges and changes brought about by succession and retirement, is the intrinsic, multi-level farmer-farm relationship that exists in later life (see Figure 8.1). Through the lens of Rowles's (1983) concept of insideness, this study explicitly reinforces the argument that farming is not only an economic

activity, but it encompasses a layer of understanding and attachment, both implicit and explicit, that older farmers have for their farms and its embodied contents (i.e. land, farmhouse, livestock). Empirical findings from this study illustrate a clear disconnect between previous and existing farm transfer policy measures and the mind-set of its targeted population. Older farmers were found to have developed a deeply-rooted familiarity and sense of belonging in their home environment later in life, which is notably distinct from the outside world. The senior generation therefore find it almost impossible to visualise what their lives would be like if they no longer lived on the farm or worked in an agricultural environment. The farm setting and the daily and seasonal habitual routines that occur therein, also offer therapeutic benefits to farmers, by improving their quality of life in an almost sanctuary like setting.

Research findings also reveal that the farm provides the farmer with a sense of legitimate social connectedness within the farming community. The farm and its associated practices provide a fulcrum around which social interactions can take place. It is therefore almost impossible to untangle a farmer's everyday social interactions from their farms. A farmer's relationship with their farm is also found to extend beyond the physical setting and social milieu to represent a space and environment that has a temporal depth of meaning. The farm represents a mosaic of the farmer's achievements over their lifetime as well as being a landscape of years of hard work and memories. The older generation can trace the ancestral lineage of their animals back several generations, providing farmers with an ingrained connection to their farms. Farmers also consider themselves as custodians of their family's land in its present history. The multilevel farmer-farm relationship identified in this study, is therefore clearly difficult to withdraw from and may in fact stifle the necessary transfer of the farm business to the next generation.



Figure 8.1: Diagrammatic Representation of Rowles' Concept of 'Insiderness'.

8.2 Research Implications and Recommendations

In an era of unprecedented transition in global agriculture, this study acknowledges that the worldwide phenomenon of an ageing farming population calls for and justifies the development of various incentives to stimulate and entice family farm transfer. This will enable enthusiastic young farmers gain access to productive assets and subsequently improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector. While accountants, solicitors and financial advisors all have essential roles to play in this process, the complex array of human dynamics influencing and hindering the older generation's decision-making process identified in this research, suggest that policy makers and practitioners should avoid the often-implicit assumption that financial incentives and the presence of an enthusiastic potential successor are all that is required for a successful intergenerational transfer transition. This study

stresses that it is crucial that such professionals are well-informed and consciously aware that the extent of effective intergenerational transfer planning lies heavily upon the senior generation's acceptance and willingness to alter the status quo of the farms' existing hierarchical structure, as they have the respect and authority to do so by virtue of their lifelong accumulation of symbolic capital. Without the incumbent's wholehearted commitment, family firm and family farm literature both confirm that the likelihood of a successful management transition from the older generation to the successor in waiting is almost impossible. Fundamental action/change in existing and future intergenerational family farm transfer policy and schemes is required if the senior generation is to maintain and sustain normal day to day activity and behaviour on their farms in later life, whilst also 'releasing the reins' to allow for the necessary delegation of managerial responsibilities and ownership of the family farm to their successors. If this fails to materialise, there will continue to be extraordinary socio-economic challenges for younger people aspiring to pursue farming as a career. The following recommendations in this study demand full consideration if the existing ambivalence towards the intergenerational farm transfer is to be sensitively and successfully addressed.

8.2.1 Recommendation 1: Farmer-Sensitive Policy Design and Implementation

Empirical findings from this research focused on the suitability of farm transfer policy strategies put in place in the Republic of Ireland over the past four decades, particularly several short-lived Early Retirement Schemes (ERS), designed to encourage older farmers generating low returns to retire. This study argues that such schemes had little or no regard for older farmer's emotions and were excessively preoccupied with financial incentives to encourage the process. While such economic efforts to confront the issue are important, and indeed have been in many aspects well meaning, empirical findings in this study have identified extensive facets to the farm transfer decision-making process, which in large part have been neglected. Consequently, a derailment of the process in many cases has been the ultimate outcome. For example, the eligibility requirements for farmers entering the most recent Early Retirement Scheme for Farmers (ERS 3, June, 2007), was that 'Persons intending to retire under the Scheme shall cease agricultural activity

forever' (see Appendix A). This largely unsuccessful scheme (it was suspended in October, 2008) was completely oblivious to the mind-set of many farmers as exemplified in this study. Findings here identified that farm transfer policy is underestimating the importance of symbolic capital when discussing the issue of intergenerational family farm transfer.

Symbolic capital defines the farmer as a social being. A key element of symbolic capital for many older farmers comprises being recognised as an active and productive farmer in society, a status which is also central to a farmer's sense of self. However, as symbolic capital is situational, the symbolic capital assigned to a person in one situation may not necessarily carry over into other situations (Christian and Bloome, 2004). Thus, the prospect of going from being an active and productive farmer to permanently ceasing all farming activity upon retirement as demanded in this retirement scheme, compromises the older generation's lifetime accumulation of symbolic capital and forces farmers to face a number of what could be termed, painful realities. Realities that come with the consciousness of letting go of one's professional identity, becoming a retiree, becoming more dependent on others, the onset of old age and even impending death. The resultant outcome leads farmers, in many cases to resist 'stepping aside', even where it represents economic common sense to engage in the process. The fact that 'farm operations that would be considered financially sound, well-managed businesses can slowly collapse and fail because the older generation is unable or unwilling to face the contradicting desires of seeing the next generation succeed yet retain the independence and self-identity farming provides' (Kirkpatrick, 2013, p. 3) makes this a major concern.

As it is the senior generation who ultimately decide whether intergenerational family farm transfer occurs or not, this study argues that even the most sophisticated of programs and mechanisms designed to incentivise farm transfer will be of little benefit if policy makers and extension specialists across the globe are not adequately cognizant and understanding of 'the language of farming' (Burton, 2004, p. 212) and how painful it is for the older generation to 'let go' of their ingrained productivist self-image. Indeed, as farmers' symbolic capital is vested in the esteem in which he/she is held amongst their peers as a 'good', actively engaged farmer, policies that erode this capital base are likely to be shunned. Therefore, until there is closer congruence of policy aspirations and the symbolic capital of older

farmers, the progress towards increased levels of land mobility in Irish agriculture will be an incremental process. However, as there is a deeply ingrained 'rural ideology' that prioritizes the process of handing over the farm within the family, the formulation of intergenerational farm transfer measures which augment rather than detract from the senior generation's cache of symbolic capital, is by no means impossible. This study recommends that any new initiatives to support / encourage the process should not be conceived so narrowly as to ignore possible social consequences or wider issues of human dignity. Both emotional and economic needs must be catered for, and ideally a policy for structural reform in agriculture must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of interventions to deal with the personal and social loss an older farmer may experience upon transferring the family farm. In order to do this, this study recommends that future policies and programmes relating to family farm transfer must take into account the pervasiveness of symbolic capital identified in this research and work within this structure to effect change. For example, on its own, and with the numerous perceived negative connotations associated with it identified, perhaps the term 'Early Retirement Scheme' is no longer appropriate for policy to use in a farming context. Perhaps the term 'Farm Progression Scheme' would be more effective as it portrays a sense of purposefulness rather than one of cessation to an elderly farmer. The development of an appropriate concept of retirement for agriculture, rather than the adoption of what prevails in other sectors of the economy is a task to which policy can connect intergenerational farm transfer measures to the senior generation's ongoing assembly of symbolic capital.

In addition, instead of reporting that farm management decisions are in the hands of a generation who may be more resistant to structural change and growth, policy makers and key stakeholders need to embrace, publicly promote and recognise the older generation's invaluable store of locally specific tacit and lay knowledge developed over years of regularized interaction and experience working on the family farm. As this soil-specific human capital (Laband and Lentz, 1983) knowledge is not easily transferable, communicated or learnable, the family farm may be left in the hands of a young, inexperienced farmer, unable to make competent management decisions without the continued guidance, advice and knowledge of the senior generation. Indeed, Weigel and Weigel (1990), point out

that the succeeding generation of farmers may seek to operate independently, yet still be dependent on the life long experience and knowledge of their elders. This may encourage the senior generation to approach the transition with greater enthusiasm and acceptance. The feeling of still being valued and needed in society may reinforce the older farmers' morale and sense of purpose in the face of the gradual diminishment of their physical capacities, and offers possibilities for a positive form of ageing experience. The active advisory role ideology and discourse recommended here, may subsequently help to diminish the stigma and defeatist stereotype associated with transferring the family farm and subsequently promote a more positive and wilful attitude towards the process over time. The development of such strategies concerning the emotional wellbeing of elderly farmers has the potential to greatly ease the stresses of the process.

8.2.2 Recommendation 2: Farm Succession Facilitation Service

Specifically, not unlike elsewhere in the world, Joint Farming Ventures (JFVs), particularly farm partnerships, have recently been promoted within Irish policy discourses as succession strategies that can provide an ideal stepping stone to farm transfer as it provides a function for intergenerational cooperation, whilst also allowing for greater recognition, financial independence and leadership opportunities for the younger generation (ADAS, 2007). In an attempt to entice and incentivize the uptake of such unconventional ventures, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine launched a collaborative farming scheme in 2015, funded under Ireland's Rural Development Programme and co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), to 'encourage the establishment of new farm partnership arrangements by contributing to the legal, advisory and financial services costs incurred by farmers in the drawing up of their farm partnership agreement' (DAFM, 2015b, p. 1). While appreciating the merits and potential benefits of this scheme, it again has an overly simplified view of the factors influencing the succession process and fails to deal with the complex emotional dynamics facing ageing farmers. Findings of this study illustrate that in many cases, the older generation, through their own admission, prioritize the building and maintenance of their personal possession of symbolic capital rather

than transferring the family farm, even to their own children. In fact, empirical research findings discovered that the senior generation employ an intricate array of complex strategies and practices of symbolic violence in an effort to sustain and maintain their position as head of the farm. Therefore, while farm partnerships, appear to ‘tick all the boxes’ in relation to the ideal family farm transfer facilitation strategy as they provide a function for intergenerational cooperation, they will be of little benefit if farm transfer policy fails to consider methods of addressing the micro-politics and management power dynamics at play within family farm households identified in this research.

The socially recognized and approved authority afforded to older farmers via their formidable store of symbolic capital appears to be a fact of social life within farm households. The challenge for policy makers and practitioners therefore is twofold. They must consider methods in which this power can be legitimately exercised by the senior generation, in the interest of whatever ‘good’ is at hand (in this case to preserve the crucial intergenerational dynamic of family farming, and allow for the older generation to remain active and productive on the farm, because being recognised as such is central to their sense of self). However, policy makers and practitioners also need to remain cognizant of the fact that such power has the potential to become ‘symbolic violence’, and act against the good at hand (which, in this case, would involve the inappropriate domination of the younger generation by exploiting their symbolic power as head of the household and farm). Having a clear transitional role for both the incumbent and the successor is seen to be vitally important (De Massis, et al., 2008). According to Palliam et al. (2011), ‘clarification of role, responsibilities, and ownership stakes will give successors the time they need to establish their credibility and independences’ (p. 26) to manage the business. This echoes previous family farm literature over the past three decades which has continuously highlighted the reduction in management control as an important element of the process. Salamon and Markan (1984) stressed that ‘the older farmer must encourage younger family members to be involved, bring them into the decision-making process and permit some sharing of control to maintain peak efficiency’ (p. 174).

8.2.2.1 International Farm Transition Network

As every farmer and each family situation is unique, this study acknowledges that there are no uniform or easily prescribed solutions to solving this complex challenge, however as suggested by Nuthall and Old (2017), ‘changing farmers’ objectives and management style needs to be handled professionally’ (p. 56). With that in mind, this study advocates that the services of a certified Farm Succession Facilitator, trained in accordance with an international best practice model, such as the one offered by the International Farm Transition Network (IFTN) in the U.S.A., is essential; particularly when facilitating discussions between old and young family members’ objectives, goals and expectations for the farm. The goal of the IFTN is to support programs that foster the next generation of farmers. The network believes that programs that help create the opportunity for young people to begin a career in agriculture, particularly by addressing land mobility, must be part of the government's rural development effort.

8.2.2.2 Role and Duties of the Farm Succession Facilitator

A facilitator's role is not to come up with solutions. Instead the service provided by a certified IFTN Farm Succession Facilitator helps guide and support families through the steps of the farm transfer planning process in an unbiased manner, directing them to the resources and strategies they need to achieve their shared vision and unique needs for continuing the operation.

Key roles and duties include:

- The first facilitation session involves the Farm Succession Facilitator initially meeting with the senior generation and then having separate meetings with each of their children and partners, if any. These sessions will uncover each individual's views, their perceived role on the farm and how they foresee the farm business being dealt with in the future.
- Getting the whole family to sit around a table together and share their hopes, goals and dreams for the future of the family farm, is the next step. This is the most important part of the facilitation process as it provides an opportunity for the whole family to achieve outcomes with a shared understanding and common agreement. Intergenerational communication is

key to effective succession planning. The difficulty and complexity of issues surrounding succession planning, has traditionally led to avoidance behaviour in many farm families (Foskey, 2005). Barclay et al. (2007) highlight that very few farms have a succession plan in place and even for those who do, little discussion has taken place amongst the family during its development. In fact, McLeod and Dooley (2012) claim that the older generation are often already of the opinion that they understand their children's hopes, expectations, beliefs and opinions on farm succession. Pitts et al. (2009) highlight however that families often make decisions via 'tacit understandings, unspoken agreements, and conversations spread over time and embedded in other activities' (p. 60). A major issue here is that the farmer is making decisions about the future of the family farm 'without having any idea of the desires and aspirations of their potential successors' (Hicks et al., 2012, p. 101). Similarly, from an Irish perspective, Hennessy and Rehman, (2007) highlight that given the 'close-knit' nature of Irish farming households (Guinnane, 1992) it is assumed that the senior generation of farmers are likely to have a good idea of the future intentions of the potential successor.

Pardo-del-Val (2008) argue however that the succession process cannot be considered as a one-way path. Indeed, Nuthall and Old (2017) highlight the importance of 'including the younger generation in discussions from an early age, developing family strategies for resolving family disagreements and, similarly, developing an appreciation and understanding of the different goals and aspirations of each family member with an emphasis on tolerance and acceptance' (p. 54). Family environments that are characterized by collaboration, accommodation, and harmony are more likely to be successful during the succession process (Sharma et al., 2001; Le-Breton-Miller et al., 2004). On the other hand, Lange et al. (2011) argue that closed communication styles in which family members are not encouraged to share their feelings and opinions openly, tend to result in more stress within the family unit and can even result in a 'breakup of the farm and a breakup of the family' (Hicks et al., 2012, p. 101).

- In line with recommendations set out by the IFTN, this meeting should take place outside the family home. Bennett (2006), in her ethnographic exploration of power relationships in a Dorset farmhouse, noted that the kitchen table is the centre of the home. The seating position round this table may reflect power dynamics within the family, as the older generation sit in their customary seat at the top of the table (Barclay, 2012). In order to neutralize such a hierarchical household structure, the facilitator conducts the meeting at a roundtable in a neutral environment where everyone in attendance must renegotiate their position.
- Tension and even conflict can arise from almost any aspect of the succession plan. If open and honest communication is not developed in the beginning, a seemingly trivial issue can stop a succession plan in its tracks. The facilitator helps to keep discussions on track.
- The facilitator ensures that the tough questions and the emotions are dealt with and they investigate different ‘what if’ scenarios. By playing the role of devil’s advocate, the facilitator develops contingencies to address topics such as disagreement, disaster, death, disability and divorce (Wenger, 2010).

It is essential for Farm Succession Facilitators to be acutely aware and knowledgeable of the defence mechanisms and tactics utilized by the older generation to avoid and deter the delegation of managerial responsibilities from occurring identified in this study. Analytically, so broad however, this research acknowledges that Bourdieu’s use of the word ‘violence’ in his concept of symbolic violence, is contentious and indeed may confuse denotation to such an extent that it may result in such professionals referring to disparate and incompatible events and experiences of succession and retirement whilst referring to the same conceptual apparatus. In recognition of the concept’s potential for misinterpretation, this research therefore feels compelled to rephrase symbolic violence to ‘symbolic authoritarianism’ when providing Farm Succession

Facilitators with an overview of the micro-politics and management power dynamics at play within family farm households.

Furthermore, this research recommends that it is also imperative for such professionals to be cognisant of, and empathize with the older generations' emotional needs and cognitive insecurities about succession and retirement, since psychodynamic and sociodynamic deterrents constitute a major obstacle to the development of a plan for the future. Such understanding and knowledge of the human dynamics of the process will equip succession facilitators on the ground with the necessary credibility, skill, reverence and trust needed to personally engage with older farmers and ultimately strengthen their willingness to address the issue. Indeed, research suggests that effective facilitators need a mix of external insights and local acceptance (Slee et al., 2006).

8.2.2.3 Farm Succession Facilitation Service Implementation

Intergenerational debates about collaborative working processes professionally initiated and guided by a trained Farm Succession Facilitator, will allow for the succession process to be developed, based on a more logical than emotional perspective. According to Nuthall and Old (2017) however 'farmers need a strong incentive to work on their style and objective factors which are holding back succession' (p. 56). There must be a seed that stimulates the need to act. Barclay et al. (2007) previously highlighted that in many cases the older generation believe that succession is something they should deal with in isolation, without consulting other members of the family or even an outside consultant. Therefore, instead of facilitation being a voluntary service available to farmers, this study recommends that existing and future policies and programmes encouraging family farm transfer and supporting younger farmers, insist on a course of mandatory facilitation sessions with a certified Farm Succession Facilitator, ideally funded or subsidised by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, in order to be eligible for any financial incentives on offer, such as capital gains tax exemptions and concessions. Effective communication is vital in the farm transfer planning process and such an implementation has the potential to greatly enhance the uptake and success of existing and future policy measures. Furthermore, this study

recommends that this compulsory facilitation requirement be extended beyond merely supporting those directly considering farm transfer and added as compulsory criteria for all younger farmers hoping to obtain an Advanced Level 6 Certificate in Agriculture (Green Cert) for example, that qualifies them for stock relief and stamp duty exemptions as ‘Young Trained Farmers’. This would stimulate and encourage open lines of intergenerational communication within family farm households, whether they are in the process of farm transfer planning or not, something that currently seems not to be the case. Lange et al. (2011) explains that ‘the more open the communication style within the family, the less stress that occurs and the easier it is to address stress that does occur (p. 3).

This study acknowledges that a voluntary succession mediation service already exists in the Republic of Ireland. The role and indeed usefulness of mediation in the farm transfer planning process is also outlined in Teagasc’s Guide to Transferring the Family Farm (Teagasc, 2015). In many ways, facilitation and mediation are similar, but in the most elementary way, they are significantly different: mediation is generally seen as intervention in a dispute (e.g. in marriage separation or divorce) in order to bring about an agreement or reconciliation whereas facilitation is primarily used pre-conflict. Due to the potential negative and conflictual connotations associated with the term ‘mediation service’, this research suggests that the term ‘facilitation service’ is more appropriate for policy to use in a farm transfer planning context as it may stimulate a more wilful attitude towards the process.

8.2.3 Recommendation 3: Establishment of a National Voluntary Organisation for Older Farmers

Another step that this study recommends is that policy makers and practitioners re-examine their dominant focus on economic-based incentives by becoming more aware and knowledgeable of the intrinsic farmer-farm relationship identified in this research. Such an understanding will be crucial when reforming and developing future initiatives and strategies that seek to encourage the transfer of farm process by prioritising future interventions that maintain the quality of life of those concerned. A significant obstacle to the intergenerational farm transfer process is

the rigid inflexibility of the occupational role, where farmers wish to remain ‘rooted in place’ on the farm and in many cases, have developed few interests outside of farming. As there are no bodies or services currently in existence in Ireland that specifically represent the needs and interests of the older farmers in rural areas, this study recommends that a national voluntary organisation is established that represents the needs of the senior generation of the farming community, equivalent to that of younger people in rural Ireland i.e. Macra na Feirme. Macra na Feirme is a voluntary, rural youth organisation in Ireland for people between the ages of 17 and 35. Founded in 1944, the organisation now has approximately 200 clubs in 31 regions around the country. One of the organisation’s main aims is to help young farmers get established in farming and assist them through learning and skills development.

Suited to the older generation’s own interests and needs identified in this study, the establishment of a new voluntary organisation, funded annually by the Government and through membership, would provide the older generation with a fulcrum around which they could remain embedded ‘inside’ their farms and social circles in later life. A nationwide voluntary organisation, with a network of clubs in every county across the country, would allow older farmers to integrate within the social fabric of a local age peer group, whilst also providing them with opportunities to develop a pattern of farming activities suited to advancing age. This would contribute to their overall sense of insideness, and, therefore, sense of self-worth, amidst the gradual diminishment of their physical capacities on the farm in later life. Collaborating with their younger counterparts in Macra na Feirme on various campaigns and activities would also allow the senior generation to retain a sense of purpose and value in old age.

Similar to Macra na Feirme, this body for older farmers, with their added wealth of experience, would act as a social partner farm organisation together with the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) for example, that would allow them to have regular access to government ministers and senior civil servants, thus providing them with a voice to raise issues of concern. Indeed, such a group could be invaluable with regard to the development of future farm transfer strategies that would truly be cognisant of the human side of the process of intergenerational renewal. An established organisation for older farmers would also allow this sector of society to

have a representative on important committees such as the Board of Teagasc, similar to their younger counterparts.

8.2.4 Recommendation 4: Occupational Health and Safety in Agriculture Awareness

On a related aspect, and while not central to what this research has focused on, is the issue of health and safety on the farm. The insight developed during this research suggests that there is much to be learned from the analysis that would benefit this very significant contemporary challenge. Farming is one of the most hazardous occupations in terms of the incidence and seriousness of accidental injuries (Glasscock, et al., 2007). Moreover, agriculture exhibits disproportionately high fatality rates, when compared to other sectors (ibid). With almost half of all farm fatalities in Ireland and many other European Union member states involving farmers aged 65 and over (HSA, 2013), this phenomenon requires immediate policy intervention. The deeply-embedded farmer-farm relationship identified in this study offers potential for understanding why many are unwilling to recognize or accept their physical limitations on the farm (Peters et al., 2008) and instead, continue to traverse spaces that would appear to be beyond their level of physiological competence (Ponzetti, 2003), with subsequent risks to their health and safety. The general satisfaction and well-being that the older generation of the farming community attribute to the daily and seasonal labour intensive demands of working on the farm in later life, appears to be part of the farming psyche. Such an insight into the intrinsic link to farm attachment in old age and the importance attributed to the habitual routines within the farm setting, will provide the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and member organisations of the HSA Farm Safety Partnership Advisory committee in the Republic of Ireland with an invaluable understanding of the various actions taken by (or should be taken by) older farmers to handle age-related physical limitations and barriers on their farms. This knowledge will in aid in the development of an effective health and safety service tailored specifically to the needs of older farmers.

8.3 Future Research

This research is but a start however and the insights documented and issues raised will hopefully stimulate further investigations along these lines. In future work, it would be valuable to explore the following:

8.3.1 International FARMTRANSFERS Project

Although this study is limited to the Republic of Ireland, and findings may be dependent on the cultural and institutional milieu that govern Irish farm transfers, its association with the International FARMTRANSFERS project, provides a solid database upon which future research can build, and general conclusions can be based. Indeed, such is the complexity of the farmer and farming traditions that a multi-layered picture comparing farmer's succession and retirement plans, with patterns obtained from other participating countries and states in the U.S.A. (see Appendix F) would be invaluable. As Hofstede (1984) point out 'culture determines the identity of a human group in the same way as personality determines the identity of an individual' (p. 22). Concern and unease over low rates of intergenerational family farm transfer and an ageing farming population are not unique to any one country but are recognised at all levels, national, European Union and beyond. Consequently, this study, while reflecting the Irish experience, will begin a much broader international conversation on farmers, their place, view, concerns and challenges in the context of the future prosperity of the agricultural sector and ultimately the future sustainability of rural families, communities and environments on which we all depend. Further involvement in the International FARMTRANSFERS project will also ensure the internationalisation of research findings to key stakeholders outside of academia.

8.3.2 Region-Specific Insights

Future research could identify whether there are cultural or regional variations in the attitudes and behaviour patterns of older farmers towards the intergenerational farm transfer process. In the Republic of Ireland, different farming regions exist

around the country, whose boundaries span unevenly across county perimeters. The largest concentration of small sized farms for example occurs in the Western and Border regions with the largest farms in the South-East, Mid-East and Dublin areas (Lafferty et al., 1999). Such information would provide policy makers with a locally-tailored insight into the mind-set and mannerisms of older farmers throughout the country.

8.3.3 The Younger Generation's Perspective and Gender Roles

As the focus of this study is on the senior generation of the farming community aged 55 and over, it does not delve into the views, concerns, fears, needs and future plans of the younger generation. Article 2 of this thesis attempted to explain the younger generation's role in the farm transfer process however, by hypothesising that many are predisposed by their habitus, or unconsciously acquired, deep-seated cultural dispositions, to accept the 'dominant values and the behavioural schema' (Cushion and Jones, 2006, p. 144) utilized by the older generation identified in this research as 'natural, like common sense' (Neuman and Fjellström, 2014, p. 272) and take their subordinate position on the farm to be 'right'. The fact that an individual's habitus is generally 'acquired through a gradual process of inculcation in which early childhood experiences are particularly important' (Bourdieu 1991, p. 12), enforces this theory in a family farm household setting. Cognizant of the crucial importance of the potential successor in the family farm transfer process however, a comprehensive investigation into the younger generation's attitudes and intentions towards intergenerational succession and land mobility is necessary in future research in order to obtain a holistic, intergenerational insight.

Stemming from this, an inclusion of the gender discourse in future research may highlight additional social drivers influencing the intergenerational farm transfer process. While empirical findings in this study did not uncover any great variation in the opinions and discourses of male and female older farmers towards the 'twin process' of succession and retirement, an investigation into the gender aspect of the process from the perspective of the younger generation is warranted due to the patriarchal nature of family farming identified in previous research (Gasson and Errington, 1993, Brandth, 2002; Price and Evans, 2006). Internationally, the gender

relations of the family farming ideology have been shown to be ‘stubbornly persistent in their adherence to patriarchal inheritance practices’ (Price, 2010, p.81), despite the crucial role farming women continue to play. Price and Evans (2006) previously explained that patriarchal inheritance is ‘not only dependent upon the existence of sons, but also women’s willingness for their son’s and brothers to inherit what is largely, in fact, wealth to which they are legally entitled’ (p.291).

8.4 Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth, nuanced understanding of the complex nature of intergenerational family farm transfer. As the average age of the farming population is increasing worldwide, this investigation is very timely. The most significant contribution of this paper to current needs and priorities within policy and research lies in its empirical insights, which demonstrate the appropriateness and importance of utilizing Bourdieu’s (1985) conceptual triumvirate of symbolic capital, power, and violence, as well as Rowles’s (1983a) concept of insideness in bringing to the surface the various human dynamics that have influencing and hindering effects on the intergenerational family farm transfer process. The so-called ‘soft issues’ i.e. the emotional and social issues, identified in this research, are the issues that distort and dominate the older generation’s decisions on the future trajectory of the farm. Such issues have resulted in intractable challenges for succession and retirement policy over the past forty years. These really are the ‘hard issues’.

As the future success of the family farm business may hinge on its ability to maintain internal stability, existing attitudes towards succession must change however in order to make the transition between generations less problematic and more efficient. ‘To change the world’, Bourdieu (1990, p. 23) argues, one must change the ways of world making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced (ibid). A cultural shift on an age-old problem of farm succession requires well-informed and intelligent policy interventions and strategies such as the ones being proposed in this study.

In recognition of the heterogeneity of the farming population however, the ideas presented here should not be viewed as ‘one size fits all model’ for ‘fixing’ the succession situation. Policy interventions must be geared to the individual circumstances and specific conditions of any given case, reiterating previous research (Lansberg, 1988; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Nuthall and Old, 2017). This may encourage the senior generation to approach the transition with greater enthusiasm and acceptance. Anyone who considers such recommendations to be too idealistic, should remember that we all inevitably have to face the prospect of letting go of our professional tasks and ties in our old age. No one can avoid ageing and as this research has identified, most elderly farmers opt to maintain the facade of normal day to day activity and behaviour instead of retiring. As such, research, in attempting to understand the world as farmers perceive it, can be drawn upon to inform future intergenerational farm transfer policy directions and as a consequence prevent older farmers from being isolated and excluded from society almost by accident rather than intention.

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Appendices

**Appendix A: Terms and Conditions for Early Retirement Scheme
(ERS3) 2007 (p. 1-3).**



Terms and Conditions
for
Early Retirement Scheme (ERS3) 2007

Introduced by
the
Minister for Agriculture and Food

IN IMPLEMENTATION OF

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005

DATE: 13 June, 2007
(Revised 16 July 2008)

A Measure included in the Rural Development Programme, co-funded under the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)



IMPORTANT

Please Ensure That You Read This Note Before You Commence the Retirement Process

1. This document outlines the terms and conditions of the Early Retirement Scheme (ERS3) 2007. The forms that must be completed by the transferor and the transferee are in a separate booklet. Persons who intend to enter the Early Retirement Scheme (ERS3) 2007, whether as a transferor or a transferee, should ensure that they have read this Scheme document carefully before the transferor commences the retirement process. A copy of this document should be retained by both the transferor and transferee(s).
2. Persons intending to retire under the Scheme shall cease agricultural activity forever. Having entered the Scheme, a person shall not return to farming at any stage in the future unless he/she repays all monies already received by way of pension. It is important that intending applicants consider carefully the implications, both from a personal and a financial perspective, of their participation in the Scheme. In this regard, it is advisable that they look at the alternatives to farming which might be open to them following their retirement. It is important to stress that continued participation in farming is not permitted.
3. Transferors should note that if they, or their transferee, do not comply with their obligations under the Scheme, their pension may be revoked and they may have to repay the payments they have already received by way of pension.
4. Persons intending to avail of the Scheme should be fully aware of the implications in relation to National Retirement pensions paid by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.
5. Persons intending to avail of the Scheme should be aware that if the commencement date of their pension is before the age of 56, there may be a gap between the end date of the pension and the start date of any entitlement they may have to a National Retirement Pension.
6. Compulsory PRSI deductions will not be made from payments under the Early Retirement Scheme. Subject to certain conditions, voluntary contributions may be made up to age 66 in order to qualify for the State Pension Contributory (Old Age Contributory). Enquiries should be made to the Department of Social and Family Affairs.
7. Persons who intend becoming transferees under the Scheme should ensure that they read the entire document and make themselves familiar with their obligations under the Scheme. Where there is more than one transferee in an application, a separate application form must be completed by each transferee.
8. Applicants and their advisors should be aware that only fully completed applications are acceptable. Incomplete applications will be returned and this will impact on the commencement date of the pension. Pension payments can only commence once all the required documentation has been received and the application has been approved.
9. The Department must be informed by both the transferor(s) and transferee(s) of any material changes that may affect initial or continuing payment of the Early Retirement Pension.
10. A current participant in REPS (Rural Environment Protection Scheme) intending to retire from farming must regularise their position in relation to their existing REPS commitment. Payment of the Early Retirement Pension will not be made until this has been done.
11. It is advisable that applicants seek professional advice from a solicitor, accountant or other professional advisor in relation to the legal, financial and other implications of the Early Retirement Scheme before deciding to submit an application.
12. Transferees who may be eligible to apply for the Young Farmer's Installation Scheme should familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of that Scheme. Any queries should be made to the Young Farmer's Installation Scheme Section.
13. Persons intending to avail of the Scheme should be fully aware of the implications in relation to the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). Any queries should be made to the Single Payment Section.

EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME (ERS 3) 2007

1. General

- 1.1 This scheme is being implemented pursuant to an approved measure under the Rural Development Programme pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 of 20 September, 2005 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1974/2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005;
- 1.2 the objectives of the Scheme are:
- to support farmers who decide to stop their agricultural activity for the purpose of transferring their holdings to younger farmers
 - to support farm workers who decide to stop all farm work definitively upon the transfer of the holding
 - to complement the Young Farmer's Installation Scheme;
- 1.3 the Scheme shall be administered by the Department of Agriculture and Food;
- 1.4 this Scheme is jointly funded by the EU and the National Exchequer;
- 1.5 the Scheme commenced on 13 June, 2007

2. Area of Application

- 2.1 the Scheme shall apply in all areas of the State;
- 2.2 the Scheme may have EU Member State cross boundary implications for some applicants. An applicant's source of income, either within or outside Ireland, shall be disclosed. All farming activity both inside and outside of Ireland shall cease on entry to the Scheme;

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this Scheme –

- 3.1 "agricultural activity" shall mean all work associated with farming, whether for remuneration or otherwise. Scheme participants may work as an insured employee in a farm related business but may not under any circumstances work on the farm from which they have retired or work directly for another farmer;
- 3.2 "agricultural advisor/agricultural consultant" shall mean a person holding a primary degree or higher qualification in agricultural science. Where an agricultural advisor/agricultural consultant intends to enter the Scheme either as a transferor or transferee, the application shall be prepared by an independent agricultural advisor/agricultural consultant and not by the applicant or transferee or a family member of the applicant or transferee;
- 3.3 "agricultural holding" shall mean the total area of land used for the purposes of farming by the applicant and his/her spouse/partner;
- 3.4 "agricultural land" shall mean the total lands under habitat, grassland, arable or permanent crops and facilities used for agricultural activity, subject to the exclusions at Section 4.3;
- 3.5 "applicant" shall mean the transferor or a retiring spouse or partner of the transferor who is in joint management with the transferor;
- 3.6 "approved" shall mean approved by the Minister or by an authorised officer of the Department of Agriculture and Food;
- 3.7 "commercial forestry" shall mean any of the following:
- land which has recently been planted
 - land in receipt of forestry premia
 - maturing forests;

Appendix B: Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics 2014 Questionnaire



Transferring the Family Farm Clinics 2014 Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

My name is Shane Conway and I am a 2nd year PhD Student at the National University of Ireland, Galway, where I am investigating the emotional and social factors that influence the intergenerational family farm transfer decision-making process. I was born and raised on my family's mixed livestock farm in North East Co. Galway

I would greatly appreciate if you could spare me 5 minutes of your time to complete the following questionnaire and return it to me when you are finished. With your response, I will be able to gain a clearer understanding of the attitudes amongst members of the farming community towards the 'twin process' of succession and retirement.

Please take as much time as you need to complete it. If there is anything in the questionnaire that you are not clear about, I will be happy to explain it to you. All information given will be treated confidentially, and you also have the option to remain anonymous.

Thank you for your attention and help.

Shane Conway
Email: s.conway9@nuigalway.ie
Tel: 0861009095

Room 116, Discipline of Geography,
National University of Ireland, Galway,
Galway

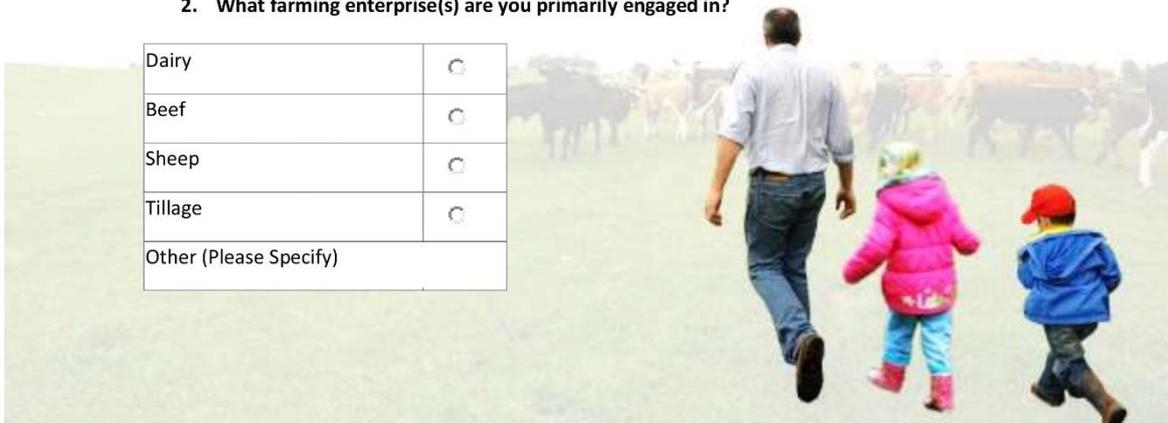
Research Questionnaire (please tick appropriate answer)

1. Are you farming full time or part time?

Full Time	<input type="radio"/>
Part Time	<input type="radio"/>

2. What farming enterprise(s) are you primarily engaged in?

Dairy	<input type="radio"/>
Beef	<input type="radio"/>
Sheep	<input type="radio"/>
Tillage	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please Specify)	



Interview Consent Form

Finally, I am keen to discuss some of the issues raised in the questionnaire in greater detail with farmers. If you would be prepared to assist me further by speaking to me at a time that is convenient for you, then please could you supply your contact details below. The information you provide will remain strictly confidential.

By signing this form, I agree that:

- I understand what my participation in this study entails
- My participation in this study is completely voluntary
- I can withdraw from the study at any stage during the research
- The data generated will be kept confidential and the transcript and digital recordings will not be seen or used by anyone other than the researcher and supervisory team.
- My name and other identifying features will not be used anywhere in the PhD report and other publications.

Participant Information:

Name	
County	
Contact Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Clinic Location/Venue Attended	



Shane Conway
 Email: s.conway9@nuigalway.ie
 Tel: 0861009095

Room 116, Discipline of Geography,
 National University of Ireland, Galway,
 Galway

Please Note

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact: The Chairperson of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI Galway and/or e-mail: ethics@nuigalway.ie.

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out the above questionnaire, your attention and help is much appreciated

Appendix C: Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinic Invitation

If undelivered please return to:
Nuala Cully,
Teagasc, Kells Road, Navan, Co. Meath.
newsletters@teagasc.ie

Postage Paid Postas Íochta	Baile Átha Cliath
L	Ceadúnas 1498



Ref#C1450

BALLINASLOE

Esker
Caltra
Ballinalsoe
Co Galway

TRANSFERRING THE
FAMILY FARM CLINICS
SEE REVERSE
BOOKING ESSENTIAL

NATIONAL
CROPS FORUM
NEWBRIDGE,
SEPT 11. SEE
WWW.TEAGASC.IE




Transferring the Family Farm Clinics 2014

Planning the transfer of the family farm can be a difficult task. There are many significant and sometimes unforeseen financial, operational and emotional aspects to consider.

Teagasc invite all farm families to participate in the 'Transferring the Family Farm' clinics and get the opportunity to consult with teams of professional solicitors, accountants, advisers, mediators & other relevant parties to assist you in creating an effective succession plan for your family.

Tues	9 September	Errigal Country House Hotel, Cootehill, Co. Cavan
Thurs	11 September	Ballygarry House Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Fri	12 September	The Ardboyne, Navan, Co. Meath
Thurs	18 September	West County Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare
Tues	30 September	Park Hotel, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
Wed	1 October	Mallow GAA Grounds, Co. Cork
Fri	3 October	Parkway Hotel, Dunmanway, Co. Cork
Mon	6 October	Hotel Minella, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
Tues	7 October	Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Wed	8 October	Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran, Co. Donegal
Tues	14 October	The Abbey Hotel, Roscommon

Clinics will take place at 10.30am & 2pm | Pre-booking is essential
Visit www.teagasc.ie/events or call your local Teagasc office 

Appendix D: Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics Newsletter Advertisement

Rural Development | June 2014

Grasp the organic opportunity



The organic market in Ireland is now worth €98 million euro.

Some of the most profitable farmers in the country are farming organically. High output levels, lower production costs and premium market prices contribute to higher margins. In many cases the Organic Farming Scheme payments are an added bonus. Irish organic food enjoys an excellent reputation both at home and especially across Europe. There are shortages in the domestic market, especially in grain, milk, fruit and vegetables. There is considerable scope in particular for import substitution of fruit and vegetables. Demand for Irish organic beef is on the rise, particularly in Europe. Price premiums are available for organic produce and vary between 15% and 100% over conventional prices.

Did you know?

- 1.3% of land in Ireland is farmed organically. The government target is to achieve 5%. The EU average is 5.4%.
- In excess of 58,000ha is farmed organically in Ireland. Average farm size – 36ha approx.
- 1,400 farmers are currently organic or in-conversion in Ireland.

- The Irish organic market is worth €98m approx., up from €63m in 2004. (Source: Bord Bia).
- The EU market has quadrupled in size over the last 10 years and is now worth over €20 billion euro.

Steps to successful conversion to organic production

- Get acquainted with the adjustments required by attending Teagasc/DAFM Organic Demo Farm Walk(s) – see: www.teagasc.ie/organics. Walks are due to commence from July 2014. Talk to other organic farmers and/or contact a local advisor.
- Choose an Organic Certification Body (OCB) – IOFGA or Organic Trust, and get an information pack.
- Prepare a conversion plan and submit to OCB.
- Apply to the Organic Farming Scheme. A new scheme is due to re-open in 2015. Consult DAFM website: www.agriculture.gov.ie for more details.
- A 25 hour 'Introduction to Organic Production' course and a business plan has to be completed before acceptance into the OFS.

For further information on any issues raised in this newsletter, or to access other enterprise newsletters, please contact your local Teagasc adviser or see www.teagasc.ie.



Rural Development | June 2014

Options course location	Contact for further details
Monaghan	David Colbourne – 049 4338635
Ballymote	Paul Rigney – 071 9189406
Dungarvan	Loretto O'Driscoll – 056 7789217
Thurles	Michael White – 0504 29234
Naas	Cian Condon – 046 9068126
Longford	Michael Clogher – 094 9625082
Borris	Stephen Eivers – 059 9183524
Bantry	Pat Buckley – 026 41604
Ballina	Anne O'Malley – 096 60325
East Cork (Location TBC)	Pat Beecher – 022 52367
Newcastle West	Edmond Daughton – 06824238
Galway (Location TBC)	Brendan Heneghan – 091 845200

Strategy for the sport horse



Teagasc, Horse Sport Ireland and the RDS are working together to develop a strategy for the sport horse sector.

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, has launched a strategic planning process for Ireland's sport horse sector. The strategy development is being undertaken by Teagasc, Horse Sport Ireland, and the Royal Dublin Society, with an emphasis on export-led growth and increasing employment in the sector. The work is being carried out by a working group comprised of staff members of Horse Sport Ireland, the Royal Dublin Society and

Teagasc Equine Advisory, Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority, chaired by Prof. Cathal O'Donoghue, Head of Teagasc's Rural Economy & Development. It is expected that the draft report will be presented to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport in July 2014.





Rural Development
A Teagasc Advisory Newsletter

June 2014

Options for Farm Families



Agencies that provide support to businesses will talk at the Options workshops this year.

The Teagasc 'Options For Farm Families' Programme can help you and your family to take a serious look at your farm situation and provide you with information on a variety of diversification ideas. The programme is implemented mainly through a series of nationwide 'Farm Options' courses. In 2013, over 500 people attended 13 of these courses and received practical advice from a range of specialists and entrepreneurs in basic farm finance, idea generation, rural tourism, organic farming, forestry, artisan food production, direct selling, applying for Leader grant aid, farm social supports, basic business planning and more. Due to the success and positive feedback received (with over 80% of participants rating the course highly) more courses are planned for autumn 2014 – see overleaf.

New to Options 2014
This year the Options workshops will give those in attendance the opportunity to hear from agencies that provide support to businesses, be it start up or established. Agencies such as Local Enterprise Offices, Education and Training Boards and many others will be speaking at the workshops. There will also be a chance for Options participants to speak to the agency representatives on a one-to-one basis.



Rural Development | June 2014

JFC Awards



The annual JFC awards took place on May 13 in the Claregalway Hotel, Galway. The overall winner was John Kennedy of Stealth Manufacturing, Co. Tipperary for his compacting silage trailer. At the Awards were (back row, from left): Professor Cathal O'Donoghue, Teagasc; David Small, Deputy Secretary, DARD, NI; Peter Young, Irish Farmers Journal. Front row, from left: Mairead McGuinness, MEP; John Kennedy, Stealth Manufacturing; Professor Gerry Boyle, Teagasc; and John Concannon, JFC Manufacturing.

Succession and Inheritance Clinics

Teagasc held a pilot Succession and Inheritance Clinic in Enniscorthy in February. Due to high demand and turnout, these clinics will now be rolled out nationwide. The clinics allow those in attendance to speak with solicitors, accountants, tax advisers, Teagasc advisers and other specialists on the topic. Below are the dates and locations for the events.

Day	Date	Location
Tuesday	September 9	Offaly/Westmeath/Cavan/Monaghan
Wednesday	September 10	Roscommon/Longford
Friday	September 12	Laois/Kildare/Meath/Louth/Dublin
Tuesday	September 16	Kerry/Limerick
Wednesday	September 17	Galway/Clare
Friday	September 19	Tipperary
Tuesday	September 30	Kilkenny/Waterford
Wednesday	October 1	Cork East
Friday	October 3	Cork West
Tuesday	October 7	Mayo
Friday	October 10	Sligo/Lettrim/Donegal



Appendix E: Teagasc Land Mobility Farm Survey 2014



amárach research S14-310 TEAGASC LAND MOBILITY SURVEY November 2014
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/ / / /

Version 1 (1a Q40)

USE Showcard set 1
RENT IN

SECTION C: REMAINDER OF QUESTIONNAIRE
--

ASK ALL

Q.14 Which of the following statements best describes your own plans for the future?

I expect that I will retire from farm work at some stage (you will provide neither managerial control nor labour to the farm)	1
I expect to become semi-retired at some stage (you will provide some managerial control and/or labour to the farm)	2
I expect that I will never retire from farm work (you will maintain full managerial control and provide some labour to the farm)	3

ASK IF CODE 1-2 @ Q14 (WILL RETIRE OR SEMI-RETIRE)

Q.15 At what age do you expect to retire or semi-retire?	55 – 65	1
	65 – 75	2
	75+	3

ASK ALL

Q.16 What is your desired succession and inheritance outcome? **SINGLE CODE**

Hand the farm over to a sole successor (keep farm as one unit)	1
Divide particular elements of the farm (land, house etc.) amongst the family	2
Sell the farm to divide assets equally	3
Other (Please specify: _____)	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

Q.17 Have you identified a successor that will work on the farm when you retire?

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

Q.18 What is the relationship of potential successor/s? If more than 1 potential successor please rank them where 1 is the 1st potential successor, 2 is 2nd potential successor etc. **(Interviewer Instruction: First circle potential successor/s at Q18a and if more than 1 circled, rank them all at Q18b).**

	18a CIRCLE	18b RANK
Son	1	
Daughter	2	
Niece/Nephew	3	
Grandchild	4	
Brother/sister	5	
No relation	6	

ASK AL

Q.19 Have you made a succession plan?

Yes	1
No	2

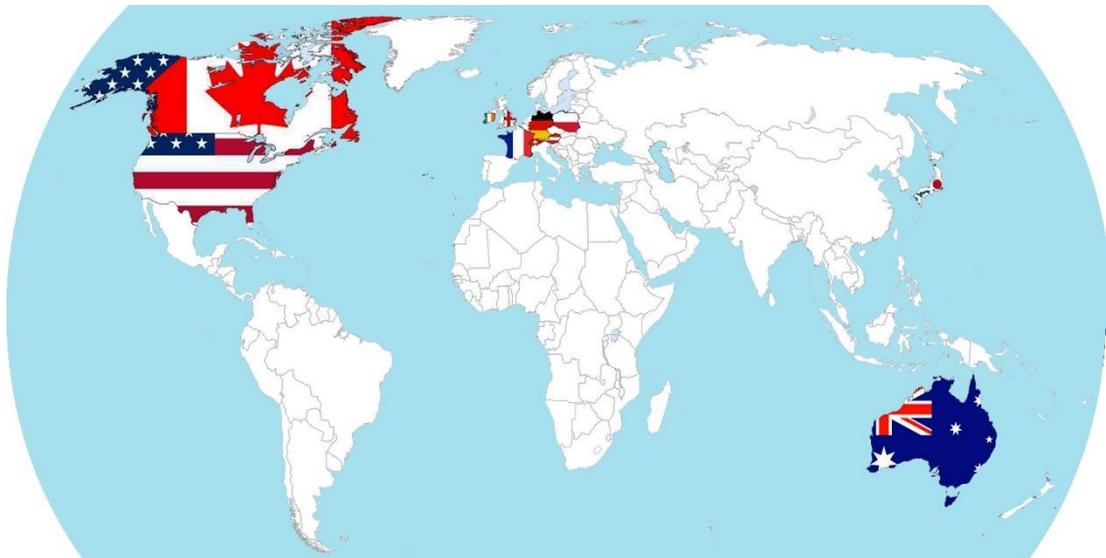
ASK ALL

Q.20 Have you a will in place?

Yes	1
No	2

Appendix F: International FARMTRANSFERS Project

Participating FARMTRANSFERS Countries throughout the World



England (1991 and 1997)
France (1993)
Canada (Ontario and Quebec 1997)
Japan (2001)
Germany 2003
Poland (2003)

Austria (2003)
Switzerland (2003)
Australia (2004)
Romania (2009)
Republic of Ireland (2015)

Participating FARMTRANSFERS States in the U.S.A.



Iowa (2000 and 2006)
Virginia (2001)
California (Humboldt County, 2004)
Pennsylvania (2005)

New Jersey (2005)
North Carolina (2005)
Wisconsin (2006)
Tennessee (2010)

Appendix G: Quantitative Data SPSS Coding - Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics Questionnaire

Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics Questionnaire SPSS Analysis.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	ID	Numeric	8	0	Questionnaire ID	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
2	var1	Numeric	8	0	Are you farming full time or part time?	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
3	var2	Numeric	8	0	Farm enterprise	(1, Dairy)...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
4	var3	Numeric	8	0	Are you male or female?	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
5	var4	Numeric	8	0	Please describe your position on the farm	(1, Senior ...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
6	var5	Numeric	8	0	How far back can you trace your family's occupancy of the farm?	(1, 1 Gene...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
7	var6	Numeric	8	0	Is it important that your farm stays in your family's ownership in the future?	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
8	var7	Numeric	8	0	Have you identified a potential successor to your farm?	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
9	var8	Numeric	8	0	If so, describe their relationship to you?	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
10	var9	Numeric	8	0	Have you a discussed issues relating to the future of the farm with your family?	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
11	var10	Numeric	8	0	Is your farm size less or more than the average farm size of 32.7 hectares (80.8 acres)?	(1, Less th...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
12	var11a	Numeric	8	0	No succession plan in place	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
13	var11b	Numeric	8	0	A lack of open and honest communication between generations	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
14	var11c	Numeric	8	0	A desire to keep the farm as one unit yet try and treat all children fairly	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
15	var11d	Numeric	8	0	Younger generation not interested in taking over the family farm	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
16	var11e	Numeric	8	0	Older generation refusing to step aside	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
17	var11f	Numeric	8	0	A lack of required experience, knowledge and skills in the next generation	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
18	var11g	Numeric	8	0	Farm income is not profitable enough to support both generations	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
19	var11h	Numeric	8	0	Conflicting goals and expectations regarding the ownership and management practices of the farm be...	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
20	var11i	Numeric	8	0	National and EU policy	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
21	var12a	Numeric	8	0	Have you ever considered retiring from farming in the future?	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
22	var12b	Numeric	8	0	The concept of retirement is not popular or well-regarded within the farming community	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
23	var12c	Numeric	8	0	Relinquishing managerial control and retiring from farming would damage my identity and self-esteem	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
24	var12d	Numeric	8	0	I would no longer be seen as having a leading role/position in my household and local community if I r...	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
25	var12e	Numeric	8	0	Surrendering managerial control and ownership of the farm and retiring would reduce the status that I	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
26	var12f	Numeric	8	0	I cannot imagine what I would do if I permanently ceased all farming activity	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
27	var13a	Numeric	8	0	Do you think that older farmer's emotions are being taken into consideration by policy makers and pr...	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
28	var13b	Numeric	8	0	Farming is not only my job but my lifestyle, past time and social outlet	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input
29	var13c	Numeric	9	0	Farming gives me a sense of belonging and a position in society	(0, No Ans...	None	8	Right	Ordinal	Input

Data View Variable View

IBM SPSS Statistics Processor is ready | Unicode OFF

Teagasc Transferring the Family Farm Clinics Questionnaire SPSS Analysis.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

	var3	var4	var5	var6	var7	var8	var9	var10	var11a	var11b	var11c	var11d	var11e	var11f	var11g	var11h	var11i	var13a	var13b	var13c
298	3	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	2			
299	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1			
300	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	4	2	1	2			
301	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	3	2	3	3	4	2	2			
302	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
303	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	2			
304	2	1	3	4	2	0	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	4	4	2			
305	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	3	1	1			
306	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1			
307	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	1			
308	3	1	3	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	4	2	3	2	3	1	0			
309	1	1	3	1	1	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	0			
310	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	0			
311	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	1	2			
312	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	1			
313	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	4	1	1	1	4	1	0			
314	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	3	4			
315	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2			
316	2	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	1	1	1	1	2	1			
317	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	3	2	2	2	4	1	1			
318	3	1	7	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	1			
319	3	1	4	1	1	6	1	1	4	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1			
320	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	4	4	1	1			
321	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	0			
322	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	4	1	1			
323	1	1	3	4	1	3	1	1	4	3	3	3	3	1	4	3	0			
324	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	3	3	2			

Data View Variable View

IBM SPSS Statistics Processor is ready | Unicode OFF

Appendix G: Quantitative Data SPSS Coding - International FARMTRANSFERS Survey

International FARMTRANSFERS Survey SPSS Analysis.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

File Edit View Data Transform Analyze Direct Marketing Graphs Utilities Add-ons Window Help

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
25	Q6	Numeric	1	0	Q6 Record gender?	{1, Male}...	None	4	Right	Nominal	Input
26	Q7	Numeric	1	0	Q7 Which of the following age bands do you fall into?	{1, Under 35}...	None	4	Right	Nominal	Input
27	Q8	Numeric	1	0	Q8 What is your marital status?	{1, Single (n...	None	4	Right	Nominal	Input
28	Q9	Numeric	1	0	Q9 Do you have any children?	{1, Yes}...	None	4	Right	Nominal	Input
29	Q10	Numeric	1	0	Q10 Which of the following best describes the level of education you have obtained?	{1, Primary}...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
30	Q11	Numeric	1	0	Q11 Which of the following describes the HIGHEST level of formal agricultural education you have obtained?	{1, None}...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
31	Q12	Numeric	1	0	Q12 Please indicate the statement that most closely describes your farming over the last five years.	{1, Have ma...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
32	Q13	Numeric	1	0	Q13 Please tell me the statement that most closely describes your Plans for farming over the next five years.	{1, Continue...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
33	Q14	Numeric	1	0	Q14 Which of the following statements best describes your own plans for the future?	{1, I expect...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
34	Q15	Numeric	1	0	Q15 At what age do you expect to retire or semi-retire?	{1, 55-65}...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
35	Q16	Numeric	1	0	Q16 What is your desired succession and inheritance outcome?	{1, Hand the...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
36	Q16_4	String	300	0	Other (Please specify)	None	None	26	Left	Nominal	Input
37	Q17	Numeric	1	0	Q17 Have you identified a successor that will work on the farm when you retire?	{1, Yes}...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
38	Q18A	Numeric	1	0	Q18a What is the relationship of potential successor? Son	{0, Not}...	None	6	Right	Nominal	Input
39	Q18B	Numeric	1	0	Q18a What is the relationship of potential successor? Daughter	{0, Not}...	None	6	Right	Nominal	Input
40	Q18C	Numeric	1	0	Q18a What is the relationship of potential successor? Niece or Nephew	{0, Not}...	None	6	Right	Nominal	Input
41	Q18D	Numeric	1	0	Q18a What is the relationship of potential successor? Grandchild	{0, Not}...	None	6	Right	Nominal	Input
42	Q18E	Numeric	1	0	Q18a What is the relationship of potential successor? Brother or sister	{0, Not}...	None	6	Right	Nominal	Input
43	Q18F	Numeric	1	0	Q18a What is the relationship of potential successor? No relation	{0, Not}...	None	6	Right	Nominal	Input
44	Q18G	Numeric	1	0	Q18a What is the relationship of potential successor? Dont know	{0, Not}...	None	6	Right	Nominal	Input
45	Q18B_1	Numeric	1	0	Q18b What is the relationship of 1st potential successor?	{1, Son}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
46	Q18B_2	Numeric	1	0	Q18b What is the relationship of 2nd potential successor?	{1, Son}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
47	Q18B_3	Numeric	1	0	Q18b What is the relationship of 3rd potential successor?	{1, Son}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
48	Q18B_4	Numeric	1	0	Q18b What is the relationship of 4th potential successor?	{1, Son}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
49	Q18B_5	Numeric	1	0	Q18b What is the relationship of 5th potential successor?	{1, Son}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
50	Q18B_6	Numeric	1	0	Q18b What is the relationship of 6th potential successor?	{1, Son}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
51	Q19	Numeric	1	0	Q19 Have you made a succession plan?	{1, Yes}...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
52	Q20	Numeric	1	0	Q20 Have you a will in place?	{1, Yes}...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input
53	Q47	Numeric	1	0	Q47 Looking at this card, please tell me an estimate of the value of your entitlements per hectare?	{1, Less tha...	None	5	Right	Nominal	Input

Data View Variable View

IBM SPSS Statistics Processor is ready Unicode OFF

International FARMTRANSFERS Survey SPSS Analysis.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

File Edit View Data Transform Analyze Direct Marketing Graphs Utilities Add-ons Window Help

Visible: 60 of 60 Variables

	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q16_4	Q17	Q18A	Q18B	Q18C	Q18D	Q18E	Q18F	Q18G	Q18B_1	Q18B_2	Q18B_3	Q18B_4	Q18B_5	Q18B_6	Q19	Q20	Q47		
1		1	1	4	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3									
2		2	1	4	3	1	2	4	2	1	1	2	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
3		1	2	5	6	1	2	1	1	4	1	2	1		1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2									
4		1	1	4	3	1	3	4	2	1	3		2		2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	5								
5		1	1	5	3	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
6		1	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	2	2	1		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3									
7		1	1	5	3	1	2	3	2	1	2	3	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
8		1	1	1	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	5		2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0									
9		2	1	4	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	2		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
10		1	1	4	3	1	4	2	2	1	1	2	1		2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0									
11		1	1	4	3	1	3	4	1	1	2	2	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
12		1	1	3	3	1	3	4	2	3	2	2	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
13		1	1	5	1	2	2	2	4	4	2	3	1		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3									
14		2	1	4	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
15		1	1	4	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
16		1	1	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	2		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
17		1	1	5	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	3	2		1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2								
18		1	1	4	3	1	3	2	1	1	3		1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
19		1	1	3	3	1	3	4	1	1	1	2	1		2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2								
20		1	1	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	3		5		2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5									
21		1	1	4	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2		1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2								
22		1	1	4	3	1	3	4	1	1	1	2	2		1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2								
23		1	1	2	3	1	3	1	3	1	2	2	1		2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
24		1	1	4	3	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
25		1	1	5	3	1	1	1	1	1	3		1		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									
26		1	1	5	6	1	1	2	1	1	3		1		1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2									
27		1	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	3		3		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1									

Data View Variable View

IBM SPSS Statistics Processor is ready Unicode OFF

Appendix H: Problem-Centred Interview Guideline



Problem-Centred Interview Guideline

Problem-Centred Interview Introductory Question

Have you ever considered transferring management and ownership of the farm to the next generation and retiring? How do you think it would affect your life if you did? What would you miss most?

Psychodynamic and Sociodynamic Emotions: Interview Aide-Mémoire

- To what extent does the farm and farming occupation contribute to the interview participants' personal identity and overall sense of self-esteem?
- Is retirement popular/well-regarded within the farming community?
- Is it important for the interview participant to maintain/preserve their status as an active and productive farmer?
- Does the interview participant think that they would be seen/perceived differently by others as a 'retired farmer'?
- Does the interview participant feel that relinquishing managerial duties and ownership of the farm would impact on their position as head of the farm household?

Farm Household Power Dynamics and Micro-Politics: Interview Aide-Mémoire

- What role/influence does the interview participant perceive themselves to have in the day-to-day running and indeed future success of the farm?
- Does the interview participant feel that their senior position in the farm household grants them the authority/respect/right to remain in power for as long as they desire?
- Is there an expectation within the farm household that the younger generation should accept the senior generation's decisions regarding the management and future development/direction of the farm?

- Does the interview participant feel that the younger generation is capable/adequately prepared to take over the running of the farm?
- Would the interview participant be willing to let the younger generation make changes to the farm e.g. convert existing system of farming? And/or do they their views into consideration?

Farmer-Farm Relationship: Interview Aide-Mémoire

- What does the farm mean to the interview participant? How does it make them feel?
- Where does the interview participant spend most of their time?
- Does the interview participant have a sentimental attachment to their animals/land?
- Can the interview participant imagine what their lives would be like if they no longer lived on the farm?
- Does the interview participant have a sense of belonging to the farming community?
- Are the interview participant's social networks linked to their farm?
- Can the interview participant connect their personal/family's history to the farm?

Supplementary Interview Questions

- What do you think of the terms and conditions of the ERS 3? E.g. farmer's intending to retire under the scheme to cease all agricultural activity forever and farmer's must be between the ages of 55 and 66
- Is the lifestyle quality from being a farmer greater than any financial incentive leave?
- Do you think family farm transfer policy makers and practitioners have an understanding of the world as farmers see it? Policy easy to read/follow?
- Are the senior generation's emotions being taken into consideration when discussing the 'twin process' of farm succession and retirement?
- Do you wish to continue farming for as long as possible?

Appendix I: Interview Transcriptions Coding Agenda

Coding Agenda – Article 1

Theme	Code	Category	Definition of the Category	Examples from the Interview Transcriptions
Loss of Personal Identity	IA1	Way of Life	Participants feel that farming is a fundamental aspect of their everyday life.	<i>'Farming means everything. I get up in the morning to farm, I look out at the weather to see how it will affect my farming. Where I go, who I meet, who I talk to, everything is farming, it is my life, it makes me what I am.... It is my whole life, I don't have any other interests'. (Aoife)</i>
	IA2	Damaged Sense of Self	Participants predict that relinquishing managerial duties and ownership of the farm and retiring would negatively impact upon their self-esteem and identity.	<i>'I can remember speaking to some fella a number of years back and he said that when he sold his farm and gave up farming that he was almost a non-identity afterwards, he wasn't a farmer anymore, he wasn't anything'. (Ian)</i>
	IA3	Non-Monetary Values	Participants detail the non-financial values attributed to the farming occupation.	<i>'I would like to be able to keep farming for as long as I can because I get so much enjoyment and pride out of doing it and as I've said umpteen times before, it's not about the money, the money is secondary'. (Colm)</i>
Changes in Social Stature	IB1	Cultural Expectations	Participants highlight the negative connotations associated with retirement by noting that the concept of retirement is not popular or well-regarded within the farming community.	<i>'Farmer's don't retire. I'd say the only reason a farmer would retire is because of circumstances in their personal lives or their health (Colm)</i>
	IB2	Social Degradation	Participants perceive that they would no longer have the same status and recognition within the farming community if they were to 'step aside' and retire from farming and to do so would be seen as having a defeatist attitude.	<i>'If you give up farming you are gone, I mean you wouldn't be involved anymore. I think other farmers wouldn't take a bit of notice of me if I retired and I'd imagine that they wouldn't have any interest in the world trying to talk to me about farming either'. (David)</i>
Difficulty Relinquishing Control	IC1	Positional Dominance	Participants resist succession and retirement planning as a means of sustaining their central role as head of the family farm (despite interest from the younger generation).	<i>'I have a son who is 30 this year and he wants to settle down and farm here and I suppose in a sensible ideal world I should transfer over the farm.... but I wouldn't even consider or suggest that. I am certainly not prepared to let go of what I have just yet'. (David)</i>
	IC2	Diminished Respect	Participants anticipate that losing authority and governance of the farm will negatively impact upon existing relationships within the household and farming community.	<i>I know a lot of cases where farmers have hung on and not transferred over but the minute they handed it over then their relationship and role suddenly changed within the family and that is a danger. (Josh)</i>

Appendix I: Interview Transcriptions Coding Agenda

Coding Agenda – Article 2

Theme	Code	Category	Definition of the Category	Examples from the Interview Transcriptions
Reiterating Indispensability	2A1	Cardinal Role	Participants legitimize their dominant position by emphasizing the fundamental role that they play in the ongoing daily management and operation of the farm.	<i>'I know I am getting on in the years but I'd still consider my role to be fierce important around here'. (Claire)</i>
	2A2	Household Hierarchies	Participants effectively mask and obfuscate hierarchical power dynamics within the farm household by detailing the superiority of their lifelong experience, knowledge and skills on the farm over their successors.	<i>'As that Oscar Wilde fella once said, 'wisdom comes with winters', and I tell you one thing for certain, you learn a lot more through hard graft and experience than you would by reading a book or by going to college and my son knows that too'. (Luke)</i>
	2B1	Anecdotal Accounts	Participants deter the process by giving examples of the detrimental effects relinquishing managerial duties and ownership to the next generation and particularly retirement force onto one's health and wellbeing.	<i>'I'll tell you a story about a fella down the road, he was in his 70s, he was a real tasty farmer... next thing he was pushing on in the years and even though he was reluctant to, he signed the farm over to a neighbour of his' ... next thing the oul farmer (chose to end his own life)'. (Luke)</i>
Unilateral Acts of Generosity	2B2	Ideological Fixation	Participants shape perceptions by depicting that the direct connection between retirement and subsequent despondency, senility and incapacitation is normative/'common sense'.	<i>'I have seen one or two fellas and they were a lot healthier people when they were working than when they gave it all up, not just in agriculture but in every field. There is kind of a fantasy world out there that 'I am retired and I can do all I like', but I'd say without anything purposeful to do you'd fall into a rut pretty quickly'. (Ian)</i>
	2C1	Goodwill Gestures	Participants camouflage modes of domination with a semblance of gratuity, moral obligation and personal loyalty.	<i>'Even though I am not ready to hand over the farm to my son and daughter, I have given them a couple of cows and ewes each to keep them happy for the time being. Ah I think they are satisfied enough with that'. (Dominic)</i>
	2D1	Generational Shadow	Participants illustrate their conflicting and contradictory desires by continuing to have an authoritative role on the farm despite having transferred managerial duties and ownership to the next generation.	<i>'Even though most of the farm is now signed over to my son, in my head it's still mine, well while I am fit and able to do a bit around the place anyways'. (Colm)</i>
Reasserting Authority	2D2	Status Quo	Participants undercut their successors ascendancy by stressing that changes to the existing managerial and operational practices of the farm are unnecessary.	<i>'My son turned around to me a while back and told me that he wanted to get into drystock farming instead of sticking with the dairy. Well I said to him, you won't have a penny left if you go at that a maneeen, so don't even bother thinking about it'. (Brian)</i>

Appendix I: Interview Transcriptions Coding Agenda

Coding Agenda – Article 3

Theme	Code	Category	Definition of the Category	Examples from the Interview Transcriptions
Rooted in Place	3A1	Farm Familiarity	Participants have a deep-rooted familiarity and understanding of the physical space of their farms.	<i>'I know this place like the back of my hand ... I know all the fields that need an extra bit of slurry in the spring and what fields are best to fatten the bullocks over the summer'. (Luke)</i>
	3A2	Distinctiveness	Participants feel that their home environment is superior and notably distinct from the outside world.	<i>I suppose I am kind of institutionalised on the farm at this stage... I'd be way out of my depth living somewhere else'. (Andrew)</i>
	3A3	Habitual Routines	Participants' lives are shaped by the labour intensive demands of working on the farm throughout the four seasons of the year.	<i>'I'm always working the land. I'd be spreading fertilizer and fixing fences and bringing the cows in and out of the milking parlour twice a day'. (Jack)</i>
	3A4	Therapeutic Benefits	Participants attribute their general satisfaction and wellbeing to the farm space and associated activities.	<i>'I love every inch of this place, it makes me feel good, I love being able to walk through the fields, checking on my crops and just enjoying the nature all around me, it's quite therapeutic for me in fact'. (Josh)</i>
Legitimate Connectedness	3B1	Social Interactions	Participants' social exchanges and relationships are closely associated with the activities and practices of their farms.	<i>'I don't do anything else only farm and go to the local mart once or twice a week. Even if I'm not selling or buying sheep I'd still go to the mart, I enjoy the social aspect of it you see'. (Rory)</i>
	3B2	'Good Farmer' Identity	Participants emphasise the social significance attributed to being recognised as active and productive farmer in the farming community.	<i>'It is important to stay actively involved in farming, otherwise you'd be cut adrift'. (John).</i>
Sense of Nostalgia	3C1	Place Temporality	Participants associate their personal achievements and lifelong memories with their farms.	<i>'Myself and my wife have been farming here for the last 34 years. We came from very humble beginnings and we make a lot of strides here through the years'. (Ian)</i>
	3C2	Ancestral Lineage	Participants have inherited their farms and consider themselves to be custodians of their family's land it its present history.	<i>'You are tied into a long family history when you are brought up on a farm you see. But I am only a spoke in the wheel of this farm's story, I am only a caretaker'. (David)</i>

Appendix J: National University of Ireland, Galway, Research Ethics Committee Approval Letter



Leas-Uachtarán
um Thaighde

Vice President
for Research

24 February 2015

Ref: **15-Jan-12**

Shane Francis Conway
Room 116
Geography
NUI Galway

Dear Mr Conway

Re: 'The Intergenerational Transfer of the Irish Family Farm: Symbolic Capital as the Key to Reluctance'

I write to you regarding the above proposal which was submitted for Ethical review. Having reviewed your response to my letter, I am pleased to inform you that your proposal has been granted **APPROVAL**.

All NUI Galway Research Ethic Committee approval is given subject to the Principal Investigator submitting annual and final statements of compliance. The first statement is due on or before 24 February 2016.

See annual and final statement of compliance forms below. Section 7 of the REC's Standard Operating Procedures gives further details, and also outlines other instances where you are required to report to the REC.

Yours sincerely

Allyn Fives
Chair, Research Ethics Committee

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Appendix K: Dealing with Distressed Interview Participants - Ethics Protocol



Dealing with Distressed Interview Participants - Ethics Protocol

The following is a procedural protocol for assisting interview participants who may become distressed while being interviewed for the transferring the family farm in Ireland research project.

If a participant becomes distressed or upset during interview:

- Ask the interview participant if they would like to take a break and if they would like you to switch off the tape recorder.

- If the interview participant continues to be upset, ask them if they would like to end the interview and if they would like you to call someone to spend time with them, such as a relative, a friend or care-giver, or someone from the local community (e.g. health professional, member of the clergy, community worker).

- Before leaving, ask the interview participants if it would be ok to call them later in the day or the following day to make sure they are ok. Alternatively, ask them if they would like you to have someone from the local community (e.g. a health professional, member of the clergy, community worker) call them to make sure they are ok.

- Before leaving, provide the interview participant with a list of contact details that may be of some help to them e.g. Console's 24-hour Farm and Rural Stress helpline - 1800 742 645.

Appendix L: International Farm Transition Network - Farm Succession Facilitation Training



Farm Succession Coordinator Certification Training September 21—23, 2015 University of Wisconsin Pyle Conference Center Madison, Wisconsin

Monday & Tuesday, Sept. 21 & 22: 8:30 am—4:45 pm
Wednesday, Sept. 23: 8:30—noon

University of Wisconsin's Center for Dairy Profitability in collaboration with the International Farm Transition Network is offering a Farm Succession Coordinator Certification Training on September 21—23, 2015 at the Pyle Conference Center on the UW-Madison campus. This training is for individuals interested in becoming a Certified Farm Succession Coordinator. This program is offered to agricultural professionals, service providers, educators, and organizational leaders who work with farm businesses on succession issues.

Succession planning is not only the transfer of assets, but also the transfer of labor, skills and decision-making. It requires financial analysis to ensure the business can support the goals of all the members and requires planning and communication skills. Many farm businesses are realizing the importance of creating a succession plan and the value of a skilled facilitator to lead the process of clarifying their goals and ideas, exploring options, and coordinating communication. A facilitated process can lead to better informed business planning and estate planning decisions.

This training will offer participants insight on the barriers to farm succession, strategies on working with farm businesses, tools to guide the facilitation process and opportunities to consider real-life examples of farm succession issues.

Who should attend?

- UW Extension Educators
- WTCS Farm Business Instructors
- Accountants
- Tax Planners
- Estate Planners
- Financial Advisors
- Attorneys
- Ag Lenders
- Farm Management Association Staff
- Conservation Specialists
- Mediators
- Farm Family Consultants

Registration is \$750/participant and includes:

- Continental breakfast and lunch all 3 days
- Conference reference materials
- Certification as an IFTN Certified Farm Succession Coordinator (after successfully completing certification exam)
- One year membership to the IFTN

Register online: <http://bit.ly/farmsuccession>

A block of rooms are being held for participants at the Lowell Center, 610 Langdon St., Madison. Lowell Center is just one block from the Pyle Center. Room rate for this block is \$82/night + tax. This block is limited and will be released on August 20th. You can make reservations by using this link: <http://bit.ly/farm20sep> or calling 866-301-1753 and use the code: **FARM**.

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2012-49200-20032



Also supported by the International Farm Transition Network and University of Wisconsin Extension



**Appendix M: International Farm Transition Network -
Farm Succession Facilitation Training Award**



Appendix N: Teagasc TResearch Publication - Autumn 2017

Uncovering obstacles to intergenerational farm transfer



This article looks at the micro-politics and managerial dynamics at play within farm households.

Joint farming ventures (JFVs), particularly farm partnerships, have been advocated within Irish farm transfer policy discourses as succession models that can enable young farmers to become formal partners in the family farm business, while also allowing the older generation to remain active and embedded in the farming community (Dogram and Kiwan, 2011; Conway *et al.*, 2016). While appreciating the merits of JFVs, the low levels of land mobility currently experienced in Ireland indicate that a clear disconnect exists between the younger generation's readiness to begin their career in farming, and their parents' lack of preparedness to hand over the farm.

The sheer number of family farms, their aggregate impact on the agri-food industry, and the potential economic and social losses that may occur as a consequence of this phenomenon, demand a deeper probing into the mindset and mannerism of older farmers, as these individuals ultimately have the authority to decide whether the transition of farm ownership, takes place successfully or not.

Transferring the family farm clinics
In order to secure an in-depth understanding of the manner in which members of the senior generation maintain their authoritative position on farms, questionnaires were initially distributed to a randomly-selected

sample of farmers in attendance at a series of transferring the family farm clinics delivered by Teagasc in 2014 at 11 locations throughout Ireland. In order to deepen and build on the quantitative data gathered at the clinics, interviews were then conducted with a 10% sample of questionnaire respondents who gave their consent to be interviewed.

While appreciating the merits of JFVs, the low levels of land mobility currently experienced in Ireland indicate that a clear disconnect exists between the younger generation's readiness to begin their career in farming, and their parents' lack of preparedness to hand over the farm.

Generational shadow

Research findings indicate that the policy challenge to mobilise and support unconventional JFVs is not straightforward due to various defence mechanisms utilised by the older generation to avoid succession and deter it from occurring. Members of the senior generation were found to continually reiterate their indispensability to the daily management and operation of the farm, thus giving their dominant position within the farm household an entrenched legitimacy. This self-reinforcing aura of importance enables them to become the purveyors of beliefs, narratives and ideologies that a reduction in their involvement in farming, and particularly their retirement, would bring detrimental consequences onto their personal health and well-being. Empirical findings also highlighted the contradictory and conflicting desires of the senior generation. Even those in the process of, or who had already planned for, succession, resist 'fading into the background' and instead move to reassert their authority and centrality on the farm, thus forcing the younger generation to work under a generational 'shadow'. Take for example what Coihn, a 71-year-old mixed livestock farmer from the south west of Ireland, said: "Even though most of the farm is now signed over to my son, in my head it's still mine, well, while I am fit and able to do a bit around the place anyway. In farms though, I've made sure that all the returns on the cattle and sheep and everything else are going into the farm account, which is now in his name, but at the same time, I stay in charge of that account, because I do the biro work you see – I sign the cheque books and that kind of stuff".

International best practice

While JFVs appear to tick all the boxes in relation to the ideal family farm transfer facilitation strategy, findings from this research indicate that they will be of little benefit, if existing and future policy and schemes fail to consider methods of addressing the micro-politics and management power dynamics at play within farm households. A concerted effort is therefore required if the senior generation is to maintain normal day-to-day farming activity in later life, while also releasing the reins to allow for the delegation of managerial responsibilities and ownership of the farm to successors. If this fails to materialise, there will continue to be extraordinary socioeconomic challenges for younger people aspiring to pursue farming as a career. As every farmer and each family situation is unique, the full report on this study published in the *Journal of Rural Studies* (Conway *et al.*, 2017) acknowledges that while there are no easily-prescribed solutions to solving this complex challenge, the services of a certified international best practice model such as the one offered by the International Farm Transition Network, is essential, particularly when facilitating discussions on family members' objectives, goals and expectations for the farm. There must be a seed that stimulates the need to act. Therefore, instead of facilitation being a voluntary service available to farmers, this study recommends that existing and future policies and programmes encouraging land mobility insist on a course of mandatory facilitation sessions with a farm succession

facilitator, ideally funded or subsidised by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), in order to be eligible for financial incentives such as tax concessions. This would stimulate and encourage open lines of intergenerational communication within farm households, something that currently seems not to be the case. Such an implementation has the potential to greatly enhance the uptake and success of existing and future policy measures.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the farmers who took part in this research. Funding was provided by the National University of Ireland Galway Doctoral Research Scholarship Scheme. We would also like to thank Teagasc for their assistance with this research, in particular for allowing us to conduct surveys with its farming clients.

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Intergenerational family farm transfer



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This article looks at the human factors that influence the intergenerational transfer of the Irish family farm.

Intergenerational family-farm transfer is a complex and highly topical issue. It is increasingly seen as crucial to the survival, continuity and future prosperity of the agricultural sector, traditional family farm model and broader sustainability of rural communities. While financial incentives to stimulate and entice the process are important and, indeed, well meaning, there are many more facets to the farm transfer decision-making process, which in large part have been neglected. Recent research into achieving greater land mobility in Ireland touched on this, alluding to the fact that 'apart from the economic driver of payments retaining elderly farmers on land, there are also

psychological drivers involved' and 'addressing the issue of low levels of mobility must also take cognisance of these psychological barriers' (Nolan 40). Rural Ireland, 2013 (2013), research that retraced policy, with economic objectives, should not ignore possible social consequences or wider issues of human welfare. However, to date, such recommendations have largely been ignored, resulting in the formulation and implementation of largely unsuccessful farm transfer-policy strategies, which have little or no regard for elderly farmers' emotions. For example, the eligibility requirements for farmers entering the most recent Early Retirement Scheme for farmers (ERS 3) (O'neil, 2007), included that: 'Persons intending to retire under the Scheme shall cease agricultural activity forever'. Essentially, farmers were being asked to sever their self-perceptions upon retirement. It is in probing these issues further that this research is based.

Data collection methodology

In order to secure an in-depth understanding of the complex and competing emotions that influence the process of transferring the family farm business, from the perspective of the retiring farmer, a purposive sample was initially identified, to a randomly-selected sample of farmers in attendance at a series of 'Transferring the Family Farm' Clinics delivered by Teagasc in September and October 2014. As these clinics took place at 11 locations throughout Ireland, the sample provided is nationally representative of the Irish farming population across a range of diverse regions, farm sizes and operations. In order to validate, deepen and build on the quantitative data gathered at the clinics, interviews were then conducted with a 10% sample of questionnaire respondents who gave their consent to be interviewed.

Results

Research findings provide an appreciation of the experience of retiring farmers, succession and retirement. For many farmers, identity and self-esteem are strongly attributed to one's occupation and, as a result, sacrificing upon transferring managerial control of the farm and retiring is a concept that they find difficult to accept. For example, 72-year-old dairy farmer Jack from the south east has no intention of retiring from farming: 'Have I considered retiring? Never... I couldn't, I just couldn't! It'd be always saying 'I'll take it easy, but I couldn't, I have that drive to keep going... sure I am up every morning at half six and I could be going until 10 or 11 o'clock at night, so I couldn't even imagine it. I make out it wouldn't be good, because I think it's important to be active, I enjoy it. But if I had to retire, it would not be for a few more years, I'm only 72, so definitely not for a few more years.'

Farmers also resist transferring the farm on the basis of an anticipated loss of the recognition and social status that has accompanied their position as an active and productive farmer in society. Subsequently, the senior generation resist succession and farm transfer planning as a means of maintaining their position as head of the farm, rather than relinquishing it to the younger generation. The farming community that farmers don't retire'. These who do retire are generally perceived by interviewees to have a defeatist attitude or else seen to have no option but to do so due to ill health.

Conclusion

In an era of unprecedented transition in global agriculture, this research acknowledges that the phenomenon of an ageing farming population calls for and justifies the development of various farm transfer incentives that will enable enthusiastic young farmers gain access to productive assets and subsequently improve the

competitiveness of the agricultural sector. However, as it is the older generation who ultimately decide whether the process occurs or not, the most sophisticated of farm transfer policies or financial incentives will be of little avail, unless they are accompanied by a more in-depth understanding of how painful it is for the older generation of farmers to 'let go'. Ideally any new initiative put in place to support and encourage family farm transfer, or any policy, must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of interventions to deal with the personal and social loss an older farmer may experience upon transferring the family farm. In order to do this, future policies and programmes relating to family farm transfer must develop effective strategies addressing the emotional wellbeing of elderly farmers. For example, on its own, and with the numerous perceived negative connotations associated with it identified, perhaps the term 'Early Retirement Scheme' is no longer appropriate for policy to use in a farming context. Perhaps the term 'Farm Progression Scheme' would be more effective as it portrays a sense of purposefulness rather than one of cessation to an elderly farmer.

In addition, instead of reporting that farm management decisions are in the hands of a generation who may be more resistant to structural change and growth, policy makers and key stakeholders need to embrace, publicly promote and recognise the older generation's invaluable store of knowledge, skills and years of experience working on the farm that the younger generation have not yet accumulated. This may help to diminish the stigma and defeatist stereotypes associated with transferring the family farm and, subsequently, promote a more positive and fruitful attitude towards the business decisions of family farm transfer. In considering the business decisions of family farm transfer, however, the potential to greatly ease the stresses of the process. Anyone who considers such recommendations to be too idealistic should remember that we all inevitably have to face the prospect of letting go of our professional tasks and ties in our old age. No one can avoid ageing and as this research has identified, most elderly farmers opt to maintain the facade of normal day-to-day activity and behaviour instead of retiring. As such, the full report on this study published in the *Journal of Rural Studies* (Conway et al., 2016), in attempting to understand the world as farmers perceive it, can be drawn upon to inform future policy directions and, as a consequence, prevent older farmers from being isolated and excluded from society almost by accident rather than intention.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the farmers who took part in this research. Funding for this project was provided by the National University of Ireland, Galway's College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Health Studies, Co. Galway, Ireland, and the National University of Galway, Geographical Society of Ireland. We would also like to thank Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority in Ireland, for its assistance with this research.

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Appendix O: National University of Ireland, Galway, Whitaker Institute Policy Brief



Whitaker Institute Policy Brief Series

Policy Brief No: 11 July 2016

Cluster: Environment, Development and Sustainability

Theme: Sustainable and Inclusive Societies

Further Reading:

Conway, S.F., McDonagh, J., Farrell, M. and Kinsella, A. (2016). Cease agricultural activity forever? Underestimating the importance of symbolic capital, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 44: 164–176.
[doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.01.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.01.016)

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Acknowledgement:

Funding for this project was provided by the Galway Doctoral Research Scholarship, the Geographical Society of Ireland and the National Rural Network. Sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the farmers who took part in this study. Thanks also to Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority in Ireland, for their assistance with this research.

Read More About:

[The Environment, Development and Sustainability Cluster](#) within the Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change

Transferring the Family Farm: The Human Element

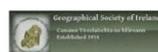
Intergenerational family farm transfer is a complex and highly topical issue that is increasingly seen as crucial to the survival, continuity and future prosperity of the agricultural sector, traditional family farm and broader sustainability of rural communities. While financial incentives to stimulate and entice the process are important, there are many more facets to the farm transfer decision-making process, which in a large part have been neglected. This has resulted in the formulation and implementation of largely unsuccessful policy strategies, which have had little regard for elderly farmers' emotions. One key example was the recent Early Retirement Scheme (ERS 3), which requested farmers retiring under the scheme to 'cease agricultural activity forever'. Essentially, farmers were asked to revise their self-perceptions upon retirement. It is in probing the behavioural intentions and attitudes of older farmers towards succession and retirement that this research is based.

Research Findings

Findings from a survey undertaken with a randomly selected sample of farmers aged 55 and over (n=324) in attendance at a series of 11 'Transferring the Family Farm' clinics hosted by Teagasc, The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority, used in conjunction with complimentary problem-centred interviews (n=19) provide an appreciation of the complex emotions involved in the process. Key research analysis showed that many farmers' identities and self-esteem are strongly attributed to their occupation and, as a result, sacrificing one's professional and personal identity upon transferring managerial control of the farm and retiring is a concept that they find difficult to accept. Farmers also resist the process on the basis of an anticipated loss of the recognition and social status that has accompanied their position as an active and productive farmer in society. Subsequently, the senior generation resist succession and retirement planning as a means of sustaining their position as head of the family farm. There is also a cultural expectation within the farming community that 'farmers don't retire'. Those who do retire are generally perceived to have a defeatist attitude or else seen to have no option but to do so due to ill health.

Policy Implications

This research acknowledges that the phenomenon of an aging farming population calls for, and justifies, the development of various farm transfer incentives that will enable enthusiastic young farmers gain access to productive assets and subsequently improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector. However, as it is the older generation who ultimately decide whether the process occurs or not, even the most sophisticated of farm transfer plans are of little avail if policymakers and practitioners are not adequately cognizant and understanding of how painful it is for the older generation of farmers to 'let go'. Ideally, any new initiative put in place to support and encourage family farm transfer must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of interventions to deal with the personal and social loss an older farmer may experience upon transferring the family farm. The development of future strategies addressing the emotional well-being of elderly farmers has the potential to ease the stresses of the process.



Appendix P: National University of Ireland, Galway, Whitaker Institute Annual Research Day Poster 1



Whitaker
Institute



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

Cease Agricultural Activity Forever? Underestimating the Importance of Symbolic Capital

Shane Conway, John McDonagh, Maura Farrell

Rural Studies Research Cluster, Discipline of Geography, National University of Ireland, Galway

Abstract

Similar to what is occurring on a global scale, Irish agriculture is populated by an older generation of farmers. Consequently, intergenerational family farm transfer is increasingly viewed as crucial to the survival, continuity and future sustainability of the family farm and agricultural sector. A review of existing research highlights how financial incentives that encourage succession and retirement from farming have stimulated little change in the behavioural intentions and attitudes amongst elderly farmers.

Drawing on two previously disparate literature (transferring the family firm and transferring the family farm) and applying Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital (resources available to an individual on the basis of honour, prestige or recognition within a particular social setting) as a theoretical framework, this research sets aside financial enticements and presents an insightful, nuanced analysis of the human factors that influence the process of transferring the family farm from the perspective of the senior generation. The research instruments used to procure in-depth data embody both quantitative and qualitative elements.

Research Motivation

- Recent research carried out on achieving greater land mobility alluded to the fact that 'apart from the economic driver of payments retaining elderly farmers on land, there are also psychological drivers involved' and 'addressing the issue of low levels of mobility must also take cognisance of these psychological barriers' (NRN, 2013).

- This research came 40 years after Commins (1973) first stressed that 'retirement policy, with economic objectives, should not ignore possible social consequences or wider issues of human welfare'.

- To date, such recommendations have been ignored, resulting in the formulation and implementation of largely unsuccessful farm transfer policy strategies, such as the most recent Early Retirement Scheme (ERS 3), requesting farmers retiring under the scheme to 'cease agricultural activity forever'.



Research Methodology

This research employs a multi-method triangulation design, consisting of self-administered questionnaires in conjunction with complimentary Problem-Centred Interviews, to acquire data on the complex psychodynamic and sociodynamic emotions involved in the process.

Phase 1: Self-Administered Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed to farmers in attendance at a series of 'Transferring the Family Farm' clinics delivered by Teagasc at 11 different locations throughout the country from September to October 2014 (Fig. 1). A total of 324 questionnaires were carried out with farmers aged 55 and over.

Phase Two: Problem-Centered Interviews

A 10% sample of the 194 questionnaire respondents who gave their consent to be interviewed at the clinics were sourced using a systematic sampling technique (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Results

- The prominent themes to emerge from the empirical data are farmer's concerns regarding potential loss of identity, status and control upon transferring management and ownership of the family farm and retiring.

- There is a divergence of opinion and uncertainty between retirement expectations and retirement realisations.

- Many older farmers prioritise the building and maintenance of their personal accumulation of symbolic capital rather than ceasing agricultural activity.



Conclusions

- Ultimately the older generation decide whether intergenerational farm transfer occurs or not.

- Any new initiatives put in place to support and encourage family farm transfer should not be conceived so narrowly as to ignore possible social consequences or wider issues of human dignity/welfare.

- Both social and economic needs must be catered to, and ideally a policy for structural reform must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of interventions to deal with the personal and social loss an older farmer may experience upon transferring the family farm.

- Future policies and programmes relating to family farm transfer must take into account the pervasiveness of symbolic capital and work within this structure to effect change.



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh



Appendix P: National University of Ireland, Galway, Whitaker Institute Annual Research Day Poster 2



National Versus Global: Ireland's Involvement in the International FARMTRANSFERS Project

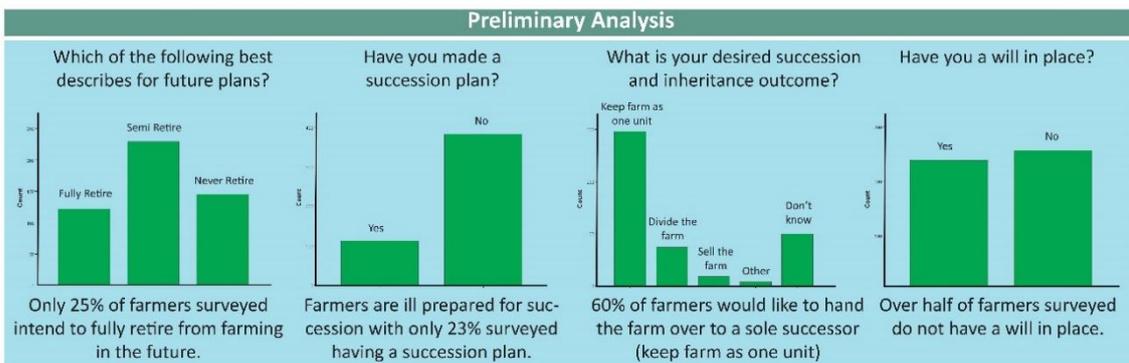
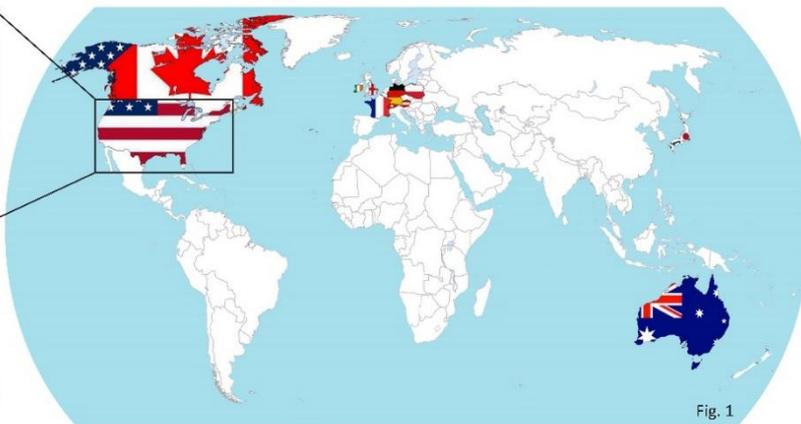
Shane Conway, John McDonagh, Maura Farrell
Rural Studies Research Cluster, Discipline of Geography, National University of Ireland, Galway

Introduction

- The International FARMTRANSFERS project is a collaborative effort around a common research instrument that assembles information on farm succession and retirement. A list of copyrighted questions derived from the FARMTRANSFERS Survey, have been included in the 2015 Teagasc Land Mobility Survey.
- Professor Matt Lobley, at the Centre for Rural Policy Research, University of Exeter and John R. Baker, from the Beginning Farmer Centre, Iowa State University co-direct the International FARMTRANSFERS project.

Overview

- The International FARMTRANSFERS survey is based on an original design developed by Professor Andrew Errington of the University of Plymouth in conjunction with the Centre for Agricultural Strategy at the University of Reading in 1991.
- To date, over 16,500 farmers have completed the International FARMTRANSFERS survey which has been replicated in 11 countries throughout the world (Fig. 1) and 8 different states in the U.S.A. (Fig. 2).



Future Directions

- Data gathered in the Irish survey will be sent to the FARMTRANSFERS database at the Beginning Farmer Centre at Iowa State University and the University of Exeter for comparative analyses with data from other participating countries.
- The results will provide a comparison of trends in farm succession and retirement with those in other countries to reveal the extent to which the Irish experience reflects patterns elsewhere in the world, or to what extent it is unique.
- This information will provide policy makers with an in-depth understanding of obstacles and issues regarding intergenerational transfer of the Irish family farm.



Appendix Q: National Rural Network – April 2016 Newsletter



National Rural Network

Connecting Communities
growing our future

April 2016

Connect with the National Rural Network

Welcome to the second issue of the NRN's monthly newsletter. The goal of the National Rural Network (NRN) 2016-2020 is to inform the broader public and potential beneficiaries about rural development policy and funding opportunities. In this issue we explore a number of key issues for rural communities. For more see www.nationalruralnetwork.ie

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Research casts new light on intergenerational family farm transfer

Knowledge Transfer Programme



Intergenerational family farm transfer is a complex and highly topical issue that is increasingly seen as crucial to the survival, continuity and future prosperity of the traditional family farm and broader sustainability of rural communities.

A new paper published in the *Journal of Rural Studies* by Shane Conway, Dr. Maura Farrell and Dr. John McDonagh, NUIG and Anne Kinsella (Teagasc) concludes that any new

initiatives put in place to support and encourage family farm transfer must be accompanied by a comprehensive set of interventions to deal with the personal and social loss an older farmer may experience upon transferring the family farm. The development of such strategies addressing the emotional well-being of elderly farmers have the potential to greatly ease the stresses of the process.

The findings are based on a randomly selected sample of 324 farmers over the age of 55 in attendance at a series of 'Transferring the Family Farm' clinics delivered by Teagasc at 11 different locations throughout the country from September to October 2014. Interviews were then conducted with a 10% sample of the 194 questionnaire respondents who gave their consent to be interviewed.

The full paper is available from Science Direct.

Appendix R: Digging, by Seamus Heaney (1980)

Digging

By Seamus Heaney

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked,
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Research Achievements during the PhD Process

- Awarded a Rural Sociology Society, Graduate Student Travel Award to attend and present at the 80th Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society in July 2017.
- Awarded a Rural Sociology Society, Diversity Travel Bursary to attend and present at the 80th Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society in July 2017.
- Awarded a National University of Ireland, Galway, College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, Postgraduate Research Travel Bursary in June 2017.
- Awarded Best Student Paper at the National University of Ireland, Galway, Geography Postgraduate Research Symposium in April 2017.
- Awarded an International Rural Sociology Association, XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology, Congress Registration Bursary in August 2016.
- Awarded a National University of Ireland, Galway, College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, Postgraduate Research Travel Bursary in April 2016.
- Awarded a Geographical Society of Ireland Postgraduate Fieldwork/Travel Bursary award in May 2015.
- Awarded a National University of Ireland, Galway, College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, Postgraduate Research Travel Bursary in April 2015.
- Awarded a National University of Ireland, Galway, College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, Galway Doctoral Research Scholarship 2013-2017 in September 2017.

