Learning and change in rural regions:

understanding influences on sense of place.

Thomas George Measham

August 2003

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University.

I declare this thesis is entirely my own original work.

Tom Measham

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of my wife, Marcela Costanzo and the guidance of my supervisory committee made up of Richard Baker, David Dumaresq, Marlene Buchy and Daniel Walker. I would also like to thank CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems for supporting the study and the Eacham Historical Society for access to images and other records.

Abstract

This thesis is about how people develop attachments to places, and what this means for natural resource management. The concept of 'sense of place' is generating strong interest in the domain of natural resource management. In particular, the concept offers considerable potential as a way of integrating social, ecological and economic dimensions of environment. This makes the concept highly relevant to an emerging agenda from a range of disciplines and management approaches concerned with the links between social systems and natural systems at local and regional scales (Berkes and Folke 1998; Cheng Kruger and Daniels 2003; Plumwood 2002).

Recent interest in place has led to a research agenda for exploring how this concept can play a greater role in resource management (Cantrill and Senecah 2001). Central to this research agenda are questions of how attachments to places are influenced and how sense of place changes over time. In response to the emerging role of sense of place in natural resource management and the research agenda for exploring this concept, this thesis is concerned with three questions: what are the key influences on sense of place?; what is the relationship between sense of place and activities in practice?; and how do people learn about places and respond to change? To explore these questions, the thesis presents findings from interviews with 40 participants in case studies of the Atherton Tablelands and Woodstock, north Queensland. The research employed a purposeful sampling design with the aim of capturing as many different senses of place as possible within the limits of this study. Participants represented a broad range of land uses,

ethnic backgrounds, ages and durations of time in the place of the interview. The data from these interviews were analysed using qualitative methods drawing on grounded theory (Charmanz 2000) and influenced by adaptive theory (Layder 1998). The research included a focus on honouring human experience (Braud and Anderson 1998), and also recognising the importance of prior research on how people develop a sense of place (Piaget 1971; Relph 1976).

The analysis showed how sense of place was influenced strongly by childhood experiences, both for people who grew up in the case study locations and for people who grew up elsewhere. Other strong influences on place involved living in a similar environment overseas, seeking profit and having a sense of self focussed on agricultural production. Of particular interest is that for many participants who moved to the case study locations, their sense of the Atherton Tablelands or Woodstock was well developed prior to arriving there. This implies that influencing people's sense of place once they have arrived in a new place will be difficult. Attempts to influence people's sense of place before they arrive, or soon after arrival, are more likely to be successful.

The ways that sense of place related to practice are presented as a series of overlapping themes. These include the practice of admiring one's place from the comfort of home, making the land produce, and engaging with a place through activities such as hunting, camping and fishing. Participants also described the practice of caring for place, such as looking after traditional country and restoring the family farm.

The ways participants learned about their places focussed on their childhood experiences, learning from elders, the role of comparisons between places, and the

importance of continuity of experience. Participants described very few ways of learning about their place during adulthood. One of these was seeing places under different conditions, such as during a rat plague or after a bushfire. Another was through involvement in community events such as festivals.

In discussing the implications of these findings for natural resource management and policy, the thesis highlights how for several participants the key influences on sense of place were tied to non-economic values. Furthermore, this thesis shows that for many people identity and place were strongly linked and this adds to research that explains why farmers may not behave in economically 'rational' ways (Botterill 2001a). The thesis also discusses the links between sense of place and post-productivist values in considering transitions in regional Australia identified by Holmes (2002). The findings of this thesis emphasise the potential role for environmental education during childhood to encourage learning about places. The thesis also discusses the implications of how people learn about their places during adulthood, arguing that further support for festivals and community events can play a significant role in exploring the links between social and ecological systems.

In conclusion, the thesis argues that the concept of place continues to offer considerable potential for understanding change in regional Australia, and in particular a grass roots shift towards post-productivist values. This role can be developed by further supporting environmental education in childhood and community events such as festivals which help us to learn about the links between ourselves and our environments.

CONTENTS

Abstract **iv**
Chapter 1 Introduction **1**
1.1 What is 'place'? 1
1.2 The relevance of place 3
1.2.1 Sense of place is linked to environmental stewardship 4
1.2.2 Places are a context for social learning 4
1.2.3 Places link theory with experience 5
1.2.4 Place is an integrating concept 5
1.2.5 Behaviour and change 6
1.2.6 Scale 7
1.2.7 Place, local knowledge and belonging: linking social and ecological systems 8
1.3 How place is part of natural resource management 10
1.4 Key issues in place based research 11
1.4.1 Influences on sense of place 12
1.4.2 The link between sense of place and behaviour 12
1.4.3 Learning, place and change 13
1.5 Prior interest in how sense of place formed 13
1.6 Defining the research 15
1.7 Thesis overview 15
Chapter 2 Review of literature on the concept of place **20**
2.1 Chapter introduction 20
2.2 Background 20
2.3 Contemporary context for place: human dimensions research 23
2.4 Defining and understanding place and space 23
2.4.1 Humanist definitions 24
2.4.2 Gender, space and place 26
2.4.3 Ethnicity and the politics of place 28
2.4.4 Time and place 28
2.4.5 Place and identity 29
2.4.6 Belonging to places 31
2.4.7 Integrating society and nature: western philosophy and place as agenda 32
2.5 Problems associated with place 34
2.5.1 Globalisation, locality and place 35
2.5.2 Unsustainable places 38
2.6 Chapter conclusion 39
Chapter 3 Methodology and methods **40**
3.1 Methodology 40
3.1.1 Introduction 40
3.1.2 Construction and reality 41
3.1.3 Purpose of the research and rationale for approach 42
3.1.4 Qualitative approach 43
3.1.5 Adaptive theory 44
3.1.6 Background concepts 44
3.2 Case studies 47
3.2.1 First case study: Woodstock, north Queensland 47

3.2.2 Second case study: the Atherton Tablelands 51
3.3 Methods 62
3.3.1 Confidentiality 62
3.3.2 Sampling 63
3.3.3 Interviews 65
3.3.4 Semi structured guiding themes 67
3.3.5 Data 67
3.3.6 Context and triangulation 69
3.3.7 Analysis 70
Chapter 4 Influences on sense of place 75
4.1 Chapter introduction 75
4.2 Principal themes 75
4.2.1 Growing up in the place of the interview 75
4.2.2 Influence of a rural childhood elsewhere 85
4.2.3 Rejection of urban life 91
4.2.4 Profit 94
4.2.5 Overcoming adversity 96
4.2.6 Living in a similar environment overseas 98
4.2.7 Production focus 101
4.2.8 Circumstance and specific events 105
4.2.9 Other influences 114
4.3 Discussion 115
4.3.1 The role of childhood influences 115
4.3.2 Sense of place developed prior to arriving 118
4.3.3 Seeking belonging 120
4.3.4 A significant minority: post arrival influences on place 121
4.3.5 Local food, place and embeddedness 122
4.4 Chapter conclusion 123
Chapter 5 Identity, place and practice 125
5.1 Chapter introduction 125
5.2 Principal themes 125
5.2.1 Veranda gazing 125
5.2.2 Making the land produce 131
5.2.3 Crafting a particular landscape 142
5.2.4 Recreating 145
5.2.5 Community events and festivals 147
5.2.6 Care for place 148
5.3 Discussion 157
5.3.1 Exclusive focus on production 157
5.3.2 A question of balance 158
5.3.3 A caring minority 158
5.4 Chapter conclusion 161
Chapter 6 Learning and place 164
6.1 Chapter introduction 164
6.2 General themes 164
6.2.1 Learning about places in childhood 164

6.2.2 Learning from elders, friends 170
6.2.3 Comparisons between places 173
6.2.4 Learning by doing 177
6.3 Themes associated particularly with adult learning 180
6.3.1 Learning as a lifelong process 180
6.3.2 The importance of continuity 184
6.3.3 Seeing places under different conditions 185
6.3.4 Community events 188
6.3.5 Learning from external sources 190
6.4 Discussion 191
6.4.1 The importance of childhood learning about places 191
6.4.2 The importance of comparisons 192
6.4.3 Resistance to seeing a place differently 193
6.4.4 Life long learning and motivation 195
6.4.5 Understanding change 197
6.5 Chapter conclusion 205
Chapter 7 So what? 206
7.1 Environmental education 206
7.2 Main influences occur prior to arrival 208
7.3 Learning that does occur during adulthood 209
7.3.1 Learning from extreme events 209
7.3.2 Festivals and community events 211
7.4 Structural adjustment, place and sense of self 213
7.5 Post-productivist transition in rural Australia 216
7.6 Local relevance of natural resource management policy 221
7.6.1 The importance of local knowledge 222
7.6.2 Positive steps 223
7.7 Chapter conclusions and agenda for further research 224
Chapter 8 Conclusions and lessons for theory 226
8.1 Overview 226
8.2 Research questions revisited: a synthesis 227
8.2.1 What are the key influences on how people understand their place? 227
8.2.2 What is the relationship between sense of place and activities in practice? 229
8.2.3 How do people learn about places, and how do they respond to change? 231
8.3 Research contribution 236
8.4 Theoretical implications 237
8.4.1 Relph, Piaget and constructivism 237
8.4.2 Age, concrete operations and childhood places 239
8.4.3 Time, experience and belonging 240
8.4.4 Globalisation and embeddedness 241
8.4.5 Placelessness, globalisation and agriculture 244
8.5 What is the future for place in natural resource management? 246
References 248
Appendix 1: Woodstock study interview guide 257
Appendix 2: Atherton Tablelands study interview guide 258
Appendix 3: List of analysis codes 259

FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 3.1 Case study 1: Woodstock north Queensland 48
Figure 3.2 Mustering in Woodstock 49
Figure 3.3 Case Study 2: Atherton Tablelands 52
Figure 3.4 Lake Eacham, Atherton Tablelands 54
Figure 3.5 Millaa Millaa Lookout at the top of the Escarpment Range 55
Figure 3.6 Dairy farming near Millaa Millaa circa 1915 57
Figure 3.7 Land clearing by bulldozer for the dairy industry, near Malanda 58
Figure 3.8 Tobacco growing near Dimbulah 60
Figure 3.9 Wet Tropics World Heritage Area 61
Table 3.1 Participant codes and basic attributes 66

Chapter 1 Introduction

A fundamental issue for social science in a natural resource management[1] context is understanding how people come to view and value their environment. The concept of sense of place is emerging as a way to study the meanings people attach to natural resources and their motivations for action. The concept of place is introduced in section 1.1 and its relevance and role in contemporary NRM are discussed in sections 1.2 and 1.3. This is followed by a consideration of the key research questions that emerge from prior research on the concept of place in section 1.4. The principal research questions to be addressed in this thesis are posed in section 1.6 and are concerned with investigating the life experiences and process which influence sense of place, and how people live out their sense of place in practice. Central to posing these questions is the issue of how people learn about their social and natural environments and how they respond to change.

1.1 What is 'place'?

The concept of place is broad and doesn't lend itself to precise definitions. Despite difficulty in pinning the concept down, place is readily and widely understood, although not always overtly. Asking people about 'their place' in a research context is not a

---

[1] Natural Resource Management (NRM) refers to decision-making by individuals and groups about natural resources allocated over time and space. Natural resources have diverse and frequently contested meanings for different people, and decision making occurs in a context of social and political institutions and legal arrangements (Goodall 1987; Williams and Patterson 1996).

difficult question to ask and requires little by way of abstract explanation. For example, when asked about their place, many of the farmers interviewed for this research instantly understood the question to concern their farm and all the people, animals, history and infrastructure that are part of it. In the same way, when asked about his place, an Indigenous elder interviewed for this project spoke without hesitation about his people's historic and continued relationship with their traditional lands, and how he maintained his relationship with these lands by visiting them and working on them. As such the concept of place is an unusual one, something that is difficult to define yet instantly understood.

Chapter two provides a more thorough attempt to understand the concept of place, however, by means of introduction it can be said that place refers to the meanings people associate with locations. The broadness of this concept is partly why it is so valuable and why it has generated interest in a wide range of disciplinary areas. Place is a central concept to human geography and also of interest to ecological economics, social psychology, environmental health and forestry. The most significant feature of this concept in current fields is that it is inherently integrative. The concept of place is a way of combining social, ecological and economic dimensions of relationships between people and environments. This integrating aspect of place has attracted the interest of theorists who are concerned about linking culture and nature. One of the strongest criticisms environmental philosophers are making of western culture is the determination to dissociate ourselves from the natural systems we are a part of (Barry 1999, Passmore 1974). The concept of place may have the potential to encourage us to acknowledge and rethink the ways our social and economic systems are connected to

ecological systems on which we depend (Plumwood 2002). The inherently integrated character of place is partly why the concept is so relevant to natural resource management, and will be further discussed in section 1.2.3.

1.2 The relevance of place

Fundamental to natural resource management is the need to increase our understanding of how we interact with our environment. An important trend emerging from literature on threats to ecological systems is that environmental sustainability is enhanced by linking social and ecological systems. One way to do this is to recognise the cultural dimensions of environments by thinking of them as 'places' (Stoll-Kleeman and O'Riordan 2002). The essence of this concept is that locations and contexts carry with them a range of different meanings which vary between individuals and between cultures (Massey 1994; Relph 1976). The notion of place is not new, but it has received recent attention as a one of a range of concepts with potential value when it comes to integrating different dimensions of sustainability at different scales (Cantrill and Senecah 2001; Cheng et al. 2003).

Considering environments as places facilitates recognising the roles of people in these environments. A rainforest is part of a particular ecosystem or catchment, but it is also a place of significance, a source of livelihood or inspiration. Place is concerned with the significance of different locations to different people, and no single way of understanding a place is universally valid. Implicit to the concept is the notion that identities of places change over time – they evolve or adapt or are recreated. In turn the way we understand places, and our identity *with* places also develop and change

throughout our lives. This inherent dynamic quality is fundamental to why the concept of place is so important to learning about sustainability.

1.2.1 Sense of place is linked to environmental stewardship

In her study of environmental stewardship, Anna Carr (2002) found that an emotional attachment to place was a fundamental issue for developing the respect and responsibility towards an environment that characterises stewardship. Emphasising the importance of being grounded in a specific locality, she found that participants in her case studies had a need to belong to places and to care for them. For Carr, (2002) sense of place was one of four key principles of environmental stewardship and was strongly linked to the other principles of sense of community, local knowledge and empowerment. However, it is important to emphasise that, whilst sense of place is an important component of environmental stewardship, it is no guarantee of environmental stewardship. This theme is further discussed in section 2.5.2.

1.2.2 Places are a context for social learning

One of the key themes to recent thinking on sustainability is the role of a particular approach to social and ecological systems. This is known as social learning and is linked to adaptive management strategies to deal with environmental issues (Woodhill 1999). Central to the relevance of place is that learning about sustainability can be enhanced by including people and their cultures in the environments we want to learn about. Attempting to learn about ourselves or our environments in isolation runs the

risk of overlooking how they are interconnected. The role of place in social learning is further discussed in sections 1.2.3 to 1.2.5.

1.2.3 Places link theory with experience

Implicit in the relevance of place is that the concept is fundamentally linked to experiential understanding. Whilst theoretical research can inform general principles, organisational psychologists have emphasised that understanding requires a comparison between theory and experience. For example, Kolb, Osland and Rubin (1995, p. xv) have suggested that whilst generalisation gives meaning to the concrete instance, it is the instance that delivers this meaning to make it useable. They argue that experiencing social situations and then analysing that experience creates a link between generalization and concrete reality. In the same way, place provides a context for people to relate the principles of environmental management with the reality of experience.

1.2.4 Place is an integrating concept

One of the most important challenges for natural resource management is to find ways to integrate the social, ecological and economic dimensions of environment (Moore 1997). Sustainable development and the management of global and regional resources is not a social issue, nor an ecological issue, nor an economic one, but a combination of all three (Holling 2003). Despite increasing concern over environmental issues, we have found ourselves in what Head (2000) terms a profound paradox, namely that most of our intellectual responses to human impacts on ecological systems continue to endorse a

distinction between people and nature. The same can be said for management responses to environmental challenges. One way this issue has been expressed, the so called 'triple bottom line' seeks to deliver environmental, social and economic outcomes (Spiller 2000). However, in distinguishing these outcomes, the triple bottom line continues to endorse the distinctions between these dimensions. Conceptualising environments as 'places' means to think of them as unique examples of different ways these dimensions are integrated. As Cheng et al. (2003, p. 96) explain, "The environment is not an inert, physical entity 'out there' with trees, water animals, and the like, but a dynamic system of interconnected, meaning-laden places". Places integrate not only the biological, physical, social and economic dimensions of sustainability but also the broader histories and aspirations of the people who are connected with and a part of these environments (Cantrill and Senecah 2001; Moore 1997; Williams and Patterson 1996). In this way, the concept of place echoes the Indigenous Australian concept of 'Country' (Baker, Davies and Young 2001).

1.2.5 Behaviour and change

A further way that the concept of place is relevant to natural resource management concerns the context of how people change their attitudes and behaviour. This broader context has emerged from extension research which has led to a new focus on trying to understand how people affected by natural resource management view and value their world (Woodhill and Röling 1998). Central to this research is a focus on human propensity and capacity to change towards more sustainable approaches to engaging with environments. What the concept of place can provide is a means to study how

people understand their environments and moreover an opportunity to investigate the influences and processes that underpin these understandings.

1.2.6 Scale

The issue of scale is fundamentally tied to sustainability. The relationship between the global and the local has been a prominent discourse in recent years, and various attempts to consider appropriate scales for dealing with sustainability have included concentrating on scales such as the bio-region and catchment (McTaggart 1993; Wittayapak and Dearden 1999). In addition, research on sustainability and complex systems has focussed on the relationships between nested subsystems at various scales (Berkes, Colding and Folke 2003). Given the interest in multiple scales of sustainability, it is important to emphasise that the concept of place is not fixed at any single scale, but is concerned with the inherent relationships between them (Massey 1994). As such, thinking of environments as places facilitates an amalgam of global change and local identity (Stoll-Kleemann and O'Riordan 2002).

People think at different scales according to different issues and thinking of environments as places can help to link nested scales. For example, a paddock is a significant place to a farmer, and sits within a larger scale such as a catchment or bio-region. Relph (1976) demonstrates the idea of places within places by showing how a house is a place in a street, and a street is a place in a suburb and so on. The relationships between places at different scales attracted the interest of Cheng et al. (2003) who have identified that the geographic scale of a place can influence people's

group identification and affect the outcomes of natural resource decision making. People may adopt a general position on an issue according to their background and political persuasion; however, they may think differently as an individual landholder than as a member of a larger community (Cheng et al. 2003).

1.2.7 Place, local knowledge and belonging: linking social and ecological systems

Whilst the concept of place is independent from any particular scale, the local scale seems to play an important role in understanding the links between social and ecological systems. Researchers in adaptive approaches to natural resource management have turned to the roles of local knowledge, local experts and cultural capital for insights into managing the relationships between social and ecological systems sustainably (Berkes and Folke 1998). One of the reasons for this was the realisation that several case studies of traditional approaches to resource management present strong similarities with adaptive management principles, namely: flexible systems that emphasise learning by doing (Holling, Berkes and Folke 1998). In a study of traditional management in the Himalayas, Jodha (1998) has drawn attention to the principle that traditional knowledge has co-evolved with the imperatives of living in a particular environment. There are three inter-related components of traditional resource use systems of key relevance to contemporary attempts to link social and ecological systems (Jodha 1998, pp. 299-303). The first of these is a high or total dependence on local resources for survival, which induces a strong stake in the protection and sustainable use of these resources. The second principle concerns a functional knowledge of the resource base. Tied to the first

principle, close proximity to the resource base serves to sharpen people's perceptions of their stake in the management of natural resources. The third principle is community control over resources, which helps in designing effective regulations. These three principles related to resource dependence, traditional knowledge and community decision making each emphasise the role of the local scale.

Related to the role of the local scale is the principle of belonging. Giving the example of a holistic approach to forestry management developed by the Lax'skiik (Eagle Clan) of the Gitksan people of northern British Columbia, Pinkerton (1998) emphasises that having personal identification with territory has been crucial to the success of the initiative. For the Lax'skiik, healthy territory and healthy people go hand in hand, and form the basis for their desire to develop an approach to environmental stewardship that spans multiple generations. In considering the lessons from the Lax'skiik's approach to forest management, Pinkerton (1998) says that a community identified with its particular geographic place is more likely to become involved in holistic approach to ecological planning and management.

In contrast to traditional systems, it is more difficult to see the links between decision making, resources and local environments in contemporary resource management systems (Jodha 1998). This occurs through gaps between producers and consumers of products, and the remote location of organisations responsible for decision making about natural resource management (e.g. government agencies). Considering the lessons from traditional management systems, Jodha (1998) encourages sensitising decision makers to the specifics of local conditions, recognising the value of local

knowledge in environmental management, and increasing the involvement of local communities in planning and management of natural resources.

1.3 How place is part of natural resource management

The concept of place forms part of the broader context of research which has emerged from a concern with understanding the human driving forces of environmental impacts. The term given to this broad category of research by the International Social Science Council is human dimensions research (HDR) and it has developed out of UNESCO programs to better understand the human impacts on global environment change (Jacobson and Price 1990). Whilst much of this work began with an initial interest in economic growth, demographic change and the impacts of technology, it has since included the work of interpretive social scientists to understand the cultural and emotional significance of natural environments (Schroeder 1996). In addition HDR researchers have developed an interest in the political institutions which underpin these factors, and an interest in the values and worldviews which underlay human behaviour. Associated with this has been an increasing recognition of the need to consider people's aspirations for environments which underlay their beliefs and behaviour. As this development has occurred, the focus on economics and sociology has broadened to include the disciplines of anthropology, geography, political science and psychology (Ewert 1996).

Place has been found to be a relevant concept in three principal areas of human dimensions research. The first of these focuses on understanding different interests or perceptions of a given natural resource management conflict or issue. An example of

this would be Ellemor's (1998) study of the Barmah-Millewa Forest in southern Australia. In this study she focused on the ways different groups of people view and value the same location. A second area of research focuses on using the concept of place as a means to approach integrated planning. One example of this is Meppem's (2001) study of place-management in Moree, NSW. Another example is a study by Marans (2003) of quality of life in Detroit and the surrounding area. Using the concept of place the study analyses the combined impact of diverse government programs on community wellbeing at a particular location. A third way of using place in researching social aspects of natural resource management is to expose the political agendas in the way we construct locations. An example of this type of research is Huggins, Huggins and Jacobs' (1995) study of Kooramindanjie, an Aboriginal place which has been renamed Carnarvon Gorge by white Australians and classified as a national park. These authors show that in tourist information it is constructed as no longer being an Aboriginal place. These themes will be expanded upon in Chapter two.

1.4 Key issues in place based research

Recent research in place based approaches has had a strong emphasis on demonstrating the potential for this concept in an Australian NRM context. An emerging body of literature has demonstrated that there are increased opportunities and requirements for resource users and management agencies to acknowledge diversity in ways of understanding resources and environments as lived places (Ellemor 1998). Whilst proponents of the concept of place have made a strong case for its relevance in natural

resource management, they declare that there are significant needs for further research (Cantrill and Senecah 2001). These issues are discussed in sections 1.4.1 to 1.4.3.

1.4.1 Influences on sense of place

The first issue for further research focuses on a need to study how attachments to places are formed. If policy aims to influence the way people interact with places, then it becomes important to consider the way sense of place develops: "If we assume that the human dimension of ecosystem management is important…a central component of this dimension must involve understanding how people construct their sense of self in place…" (Cantrill and Senecah 2001, p. 185). Studying the influences and processes by which people develop their attachments to locations assists understanding how policies will be received.

1.4.2 The link between sense of place and behaviour

A related issue for further research concerns the link between sense of place and activities in practice. Understanding sense of place alone is only relevant to natural resource policy if it is possible to tie sense of place to behaviour. A major interest of environmental psychology concerns the relationship between sense of self and propensity to adopt sustainability oriented practices (Bixler, Floyd and Hammitt 2002). With this in mind, several researchers have been interested in the link between been sense of place and concern for environmental issues (Stedman 2002). Social psychologists point out that the links between attitudes and behaviours are not always

simple. For this reason it is important to further explore the links between sense of place and behaviour (Stedman 2002).

1.4.3 Learning, place and change

The final major area for research on place is linked to both the influences on sense of place and the relationship between place and behaviour. This third question for research on sense of place concerns how people learn about places and what triggers change (Cantrill and Senecah 2001). Fundamental to this issue is the extent to which people can adapt a sense of place once it is developed, or if the influences on sense of place are such that once it is formed it is fixed for life. More precisely, if a sense of place is changeable, what is involved in bringing about transition? It is argued here that studying if and how a sense of place changes is a crucial issue for developing the concept of place.

1.5 Prior interest in how sense of place formed

Geographers have had a strong interest in the way that attachments to places develop. One of the ways geographers have considered this question concerns the study of human perception (Tuan 1974, 1990). Drawing on research as diverse human biology and psychology Tuan was interested in the characteristics of our bodies and minds which have pre-disposed all humans to sense and perceive space in particular ways. Yet whilst our eyes, ears and hands have evolved to respond to particular stimuli, our minds can interpret these stimuli with considerable diversity. In his study of human perception and values, understanding how different people interpret the same phenomena was one

of the central concerns for Tuan. Concurrently with Tuan, Relph (1976) was drawing on a range of different disciplines. His work *Place and Placelessness* is one of several definitive texts on place that will be discussed further in chapter two. Like Tuan, he not only wanted to understand places mean for people, he also had a strong interest in how attachments to places develop.

Relph's (1976) consideration of how attachments to places develop led him to adopt some principles from constructivism and child psychology concerned with the way humans learn to order information. This took the form of Piaget's (1971) distinction between the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation refers to the process of fitting the external world into the mental structures that have already been created. By contrast, accommodation refers to adjusting these structures to accommodate them to new information. Using these, constructing place can be conceptualised as a continual balancing of observations with expectations and pre-existing ideas with new information (Relph 1976). Whilst this is an insightful principle in itself, it raises more questions than it answers for developing the concept of place: Are these two processes, assimilation and accommodation equally important in the construction of place? Over what time frames do they occur? What is involved in developing an *a priori* construction? How influential are *a priori* constructions? What triggers the process of accommodation? It was not possible to fully address all of these questions in this research, however, this thesis makes a contribution towards further understanding the relationship between accommodation and assimilation in developing a sense of place (section 8.4.1).

Geographers have also been interested in the social and political influences operating throughout society that shape the identity of places. These include issues such gender, class and ethnicity (Massey 1994; Kemmis 1996). In addition, the concept has played a role in the field of human ecology including important contributions from ecofeminism (Plumwood 2002) and ecological economics (Hansson and Wackernagel 1999). These links with ecology have reinforced the need to understand the way people build attachments to places. This is because the way people understand places has been recognised as an important step in rethinking the way social and ecological systems are inter-related (Stoll-Kleeman and O'Riordan 2002).

1.6 Defining the research

This thesis focuses on how people develop a sense of place and the implications this may have for natural resource management policy. These themes can be expressed as the following broad questions:

1. What are the key influences on how people understand their place?

2. What is the relationship between sense of place and activities in practice?

3. How do people learn about places, and how do they respond to change?

1.7 Thesis overview

This chapter has introduced the concept of place and the three research questions to be explored in the remainder of the thesis. The theoretical foundations for the thesis are

developed in chapter two through an expanded review of key literature that has shaped the concept of place. The methodology and methods employed in this thesis are discussed in chapter three. The discussion of methodology commences by explaining the qualitative inductive position adopted throughout this work (section 3.1). This is followed by details of the case studies, sampling and in depth interviews used to address the research questions (sections 3.2 and 3.3). Chapters four, five and six present the findings for the three research questions addressed in this thesis respectively. Because the thesis uses the same case studies to investigate three inter-related questions, the three chapters are inherently interlinked. The chapters were written simultaneously and make use of an iterative approach to explore how the themes in each chapter are connected.

Focussing on the empirical analysis of the interviews, chapter four presents a discussion of the key influences organised into a series of themes. Rather than discrete typologies, these themes overlap with each other, involving significant relationships between different influences on sense of place. These key themes involve the influence of growing up as a child, a strong value attachment to agricultural production, a rejection of urban life, seeking profit, and overcoming adversity and personal trauma.

The way that sense of place translates into practice is discussed in chapter five. Following a similar approach to chapter four, the chapter draws on the empirical interview data and presents the findings in a series of themes. These themes are strongly related to the themes discussed in chapter four. For example, the theme of 'veranda gazing' is linked to the people who were influenced by a rejection of urban life

and by a romanticised rural childhood. Another theme focuses on recreation in nature, involving celebrating being in place through such activities as camping, rambling through the bush and hunting pigs. This theme was strongly tied to people who grew up in the case study regions and were strongly influenced by playing in the creeks or running in the scrub when they were younger.

Chapter six considers the themes of chapters four and five and presents a discussion of what the interviews reveal about how people learn about their places. The chapter considers the importance of different life stages in learning, and how important childhood experiences are in how we learn about places. The chapter also discusses some of the key triggers of adult learning about places, such as the significance of seeing a place under different conditions and the role of continuity in learning about places.

Having discussed the findings to the three key research questions in chapters four to six, chapter seven considers the implications of these findings for natural resource management policy. Given the strong role of childhood experience in influencing sense of place, section 7.1 discusses the importance of environmental education. The chapter also considers the ideas that people bring with them to a place when they move from one place to another (section 7.2). Based on the discussion presented in chapter four, it is apparent that for many people who move to a place, their sense of the place is largely developed prior to arrival. The chapter also discusses 2 important areas of learning about place during adulthood (section 7.3). The first of these involves seeing a place under different conditions such as following a natural disaster and has significant

implications for policy (section 7.3.1). Though they can cause significant damage and trauma, it is possible to benefit from extreme events, by using them as a trigger for learning the about our relationship with our environment. The second area of learning discussed in chapter seven (section 7.3.2) is the role of community events and festivals in fostering learning about places. This research has found that such events can encourage people to step out of their ordinary circumstances and broaden their understanding of a place.

Some broader themes for natural resource management in Australia are discussed in section 7.4. Of key importance is that the underlying influences on sense of place and the relationship with activities in practice may help to explain policy failure in terms of structural adjustment. Essential to the discussion is the principle that farms have greater significance to many rural people than merely their role in economic production. The non-economic values of farms are discussed in relation to agrarian philosophy, as described by Botterill (2001a). The chapter also considers the role of change in rural regions and discusses the idea of a 'post-productivist' transition (Holmes 2002). This emerging concept is partly concerned with the rise of 'amenity oriented recreationists' leaving cities in favour of the countryside, as well as the rise of niche industries in marginal agricultural land. Though it is presented as a recent transition, the research presented in this thesis suggests that many of the reasons people are undertaking this transition are not new. These reasons are concerned with people's desire to connect with their own past or a desire to escape from unfulfilling lives in urban environments and finding a strong need to belong to a local community.

The conclusions of the thesis are discussed in chapter eight. The chapter reviews and synthesises the answers to the research questions considered in this thesis. This is followed by discussing what the thesis can add to existing theory about influences on sense of place. The thesis shows that not only are childhood experiences important, there is some evidence that a particular stage of childhood seems to be highly relevant to forming a basis for developing a sense of place (section 8.4.2). The chapter also considers how people develop belonging and what this means for the issues of embeddedness and globalisation (section 8.4.4). Throughout this discussion, it is shown that the concept of place has much to offer for the future of natural resource management, particularly in finding ways to help people develop a deeper level of attachment to their environments, which is assisted through a focus on experiential learning.

Chapter 2 Review of literature on the concept of place

2.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the concept of place in natural resource management and in the process sets out the context for this doctoral thesis. Building upon chapter one, the chapter will provide a more detailed consideration of the background to this concept (section 2.2). The contemporary context for research using the concept of place is discussed in section 2.3. A detailed definition of the concept of place is developed in section 2.4, which discusses several themes including time, belonging, gender and identity. Whilst the methods for conducting the research are discussed in detail in chapter three, some broad questions of approaching place will be raised in this chapter.

2.2 Background

The concept of place is central to geography and can be traced to at least the 1st Century A.D. (Relph 1976). In particular has attracted strong attention from human geographers such as Relph (1976), Tuan (1974, 1990) and Lukermann (1964). In part this interest has represented a departure from positivist 'spatial analyst' geography (Tuan 1974) and has been fuelled by a desire to explore the meanings of places beyond mere coordinates on a map.

Humanistic geographers interested in place have drawn on the phenomenological philosophy of Heidegger (1958) who argued that place is fundamental to being in the

world: "*place* places man in such a way that it reveals the external bounds of his existence and at the same time the depths of his freedom and reality" (Heidegger 1958, p. 19). Heidegger's concern was both existential and political: humans know their surroundings, but also their *place in society* in terms of power structures. The philosophy which underpinned place was not only interested in the notion that human identity is tied to locality, but with the principle that humans are the types of creatures who are able to engage with a location and the events and objects that are associated with it (Malpas 1999). This theme is crucial: place is about belonging to a location and all the cultural activities that are associated with that location.

Interest in the concept of place has been associated with environmental issues, with a strong desire to protect symbolic places from development. The attempt to save Lake Pedder from development in Tasmania, provides an example of an environmental movement highly focussed on a symbolic place. In his submission into the Australian Governments 1973 Committee of Inquiry regarding Lake Pedder, Max Angus commenced thus:

> Throughout history people have recognised by common consent that certain places have a strange quality that sets them apart from all others. They have often been places of worship. Undeniably Lake Pedder was such a place (Angus in Brown 1986 p. 16).

Though a strong link evolved between environmental concerns and the concept of place, in many cases, proponents of place have found environmental issues to be overly technocentric.

> Much of the recent discussion on environmental issues I have found both unsatisfactory and disquieting. Unsatisfactory because the analyses of behaviour or of particular problems are so frequently mechanical and abstract, simplifying the world into easily represented structures or models that ignore much of the subtlety and significance of everyday experience. Disquieting because these simplified structures often then serve as the basis for proposals for the design of environments and the manipulation of people and places into patterns that are supposed to be more efficient (Relph 1976: i).

Relph viewed technical analysis of environmental problems as denying one of the most important aspects of these issues: that environments were lived places. He was interested in values, perceptions and above all, the meaning of these environments to the people who fought over them with such conviction.

Interest in the concept of place has also been related to developments in urban planning associated with modernism. In particular, Relph (1976) was motivated by an apparent lack of attention to place in town planning. His concerns about the technical and de-humanising aspects of town planning were fuelled by the explosion in uniform functional designs such as large subdivisions of identical houses, shopping malls and drive through retail outlets. Relph (1976) employed the term 'placelessness' to represent these superficial aspects of post-industrial society where people are not deeply tied to their dwellings and workplaces. It is in this context that Relph argued that humans have a deep need for associations with significant places, and that this was not always reflected in urban planning or environmental debates.

2.3 Contemporary context for place: human dimensions research

Underlying contemporary interest in place is the notion that considering resources or environments as ‘places’ involves acknowledging a suite of meanings and responsibilities that is otherwise inadequately accounted for in environmental management (Sagoff 1996). Recent interest in place-based approaches has included the fields of political geography (Escobar 2001), social psychology (Stedman 2002), environmental policy (Cantrill and Senecah 2001), ecological economics (Meppem 2000), environmental health (Whittaker 1998) and forestry (Kruger and Shannon 2000). Much of this interest can be situated broadly into the domain of human dimensions research (HDR). This category of research has emerged from concerns for understanding the 'human driving forces' of environmental impacts and the meanings that environments have for different people. Human dimensions research has drawn on the disciplines of economics, sociology, anthropology, geography, political science and psychology. This range of disciplines indicates that HDR is located at the confluence of a broad area of academic interests. It also indicates a practical concern whereby human dimensions researchers are not necessarily faithful to any single discipline but draw on a range of disciplines to assist understanding the issues involved (Ewert 1996).

2.4 Defining and understanding place and space

Broadly speaking, place is a concept which represents the meanings that people associate with physical locations. Beyond this, the concept does not lend itself to

precise definitions. Its definition has evolved according to the context in which the concept has been employed. This section discusses several important themes relevant to the role of place in natural resource management, including humanist approaches to place (section 2.4.1) and political aspects to place (sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3).

2.4.1 Humanist definitions

Tuan (1974, 1990) and Relph (1976) defined the concept of place in relation to space. The concept of space can be conceptualised as the world that a human knows whereas a place is a symbolic focal point of meaning within this world. A home is a place which may consist of a house in the space of the street. This relationship of particular places amongst the context of more general spaces can occur at multiple scales, thus a country can be a place amongst the space of the globe. Tuan (1974) drew attention to characteristics of human modes of perception and the similarities in the way distinct cultures have come quite separately to value and understand the worlds they know. It is important to point out that both places and spaces are human constructs which reflect attitudes and values. Furthermore, that space and place can reflect quite different modes of being in the world, which can include spiritual meanings (Relph 1976).

From the work of some key geographers, a suite of key components of *place* can be made (Lukermann 1964; Relph 1976; Tuan 1974). Location is a required (but insufficient) aspect of a place. Despite this, precise boundaries aren't necessarily important and they may be open to change. It is also possible for the boundaries of places to overlap. What is important, however, is that place involves some sort of

special ensemble, an integration of human culture and natural elements such that they have special meanings. These sets of special meanings are unique – no two places can be identical. They are, however, connected to other places through linkages such as roads or corridors, and these links are part of a place's defining features. Places are not fixed at any given scale – they can be as small or large as the human mind can imagine. Furthermore, a place at one scale does not preclude the same place being part of a place at larger scale: a town can be part of a region, yet both can be places in their own right.

Human geographers have acknowledged that the same place can have different meanings for different people, or groups of people. An example of this is Meinig's (1979) essay on how the same physical location can have quite different meanings depending upon the interests and concerns of the beholder. The different ways of viewing the same location reflect power dimensions in society (Kemmis 1996) and this is further discussed in following sections (2.4.2 and 2.4.3). Though interest in political dimensions of place has increased in recent decades, humanist interests in place have continued to be relevant to sustainability. This is partly in response to a renewed interest in human beings as social agents who go out and make meaning in their environments (Williams and Patterson 1999). The social and political forces that influence the relationships between people and place are strong, but the role of human agency and determination to influence one's own destiny are also considerable forces. In her work on gendered geographies in Australia, Johnson (2000) uses the term 'placebound' to represent both the limitations of gendered geographies but also the initiatives of women to shape their own destinies.

In natural resource management, the meanings and aspirations that people associate with places continues to generate strong interest. Schroeder (1996) has observed that if we are to include people as part of ecosystems, we must recognise that people's experiences of nature and aspirations for environments are part of this process. If we want to study the relationships between people and their environments we need to include emotional, imaginative and spiritual experiences in the way people interact with ecological systems. In human dimensions research , to acknowledge and rethink the connections between social and ecological systems involves studying the existing meanings people attach to these places (Ewert 1996; Schroeder 1996).

2.4.2 Gender, space and place

Massey (1994) has emphasised the roles of both class and gender in understanding place. She studied the work patterns from nineteenth century English coal mining industries to the 1960s regional decentralisation of labour. What she found amongst these geographies was a gendered division of labour that was spatially explicit. She found that 'a woman's place' was quite distinct from a man's. The male gendered coal mine pits, and the pubs they socialised in were different spaces to houses where women raised children and worked as domestic servants. Based on this work she emphasised the importance of social relationships in shaping the identities of places. In an Australian context Johnson (2000) has demonstrated the same principle by studying a gendered division of labour is apparent in workplaces.

Massey (1994) also argued that the concept of space needs to be conceptualised as more than a static background. She conceptualises space as being made up of social relations and hence full of meaning. In her own words, she sees space as social relations 'stretched out'. Viewed this way, space is in a constant state of change, and this is why time is so important. Drawing on developments in physics, she argued that time and space are always connected. She argued that this 'space-time' context involves a configuration of social relations, and as a result they are inevitably imbued with human power relationships and systems of meaning.

She further argued that space-time is inherently imbued with a range of dynamic factors exterior to human culture. To the human eye nature may sometimes appear to be static at the point of observation, but Massey argues that this is an illusion. She emphasises that nature is in a state of constant, though sometimes invisible change. So for Massey, space is made up of a wide range of considerations, both human and non-human, all of which are in continuous change, reflecting both human power relationships and natural forces. These form individual contexts – urban space is different from rural space and male space is different from female space (Massey 1994).

Consistent with space being a set of relations, Massey (1994) represents place as a particular example or articulation of those relations. Due to the scale differences between places and spaces, she emphasises that a place may not express all of the social relations that have influenced it. This is particularly relevant to cases of local expression of global aspects of natural resource management. Though a dairy farm or

national park in Australia has a unique, local identity it is intrinsically tied to a broader context affected by issues such as global markets and concerns for biodiversity.

2.4.3 Ethnicity and the politics of place

In addition to being constructed out of gender and class relationships, places also reflect power relations based upon ethnicity. Huggins et al. (1995) provide an illuminating example of this in their study of Kooramindanjie, what is known by settler Australians as 'Carnarvon Gorge' in Queensland, Australia. Using this place as a case study, the authors describe how Aboriginal people were physically dis-placed during the 1920s. In addition Aboriginal people have been deliberately omitted from a subsequent discourse associated with this place. In their case study, the authors draw attention to tourist interpretation literature for Carnarvon Gorge that portrays the view that the place was once a home for Indigenous people but is no longer. As such, the Aboriginal owners are denied a voice in the contemporary identity of this place. This case study speaks volumes for the history of dispossession of land for Indigenous Australians and the difficulties they continue to face to have their ownership recognised. It also shows how the concept of place is a useful conceptual tool for understanding this process.

2.4.4 Time and place

In considering the temporal aspects of place, Baker (1992) draws attention to Marx's observation that people are both a product and producer of their historical contexts. A defining principle of place concerns time: places are bound to temporal contexts. Furthermore, places develop and decline over time, but even after they are physically

changed or destroyed their meanings can continue. The Roman Empire declined many years ago yet the city of Rome has maintained a link with this past period. Part of Rome's identity today is the significance it had as a focal point of a former era.

Whilst no particular timeframes are specified for either the development or duration of places, the interest of place to natural resource management implies relatively long time frames. Although the place where one parks a car in the space of a car park may involve the timeframe of a few hours it is not this type of place or timeframe which is of interest to ecological sustainability. The relationship between humans and location may take place over several years. An example of the role of time, place and natural resource management is the suggestion by Cantrill and Senecah (2001) that distinctions can be made between the way newcomers and established residents understand the same place. There is evidence that relative newcomers to places may view their relationship to that location as independent of social relations, whereas people with a longer duration exhibit a stronger level of social interdependence.

2.4.5 Place and identity

The relationship between person and location which makes up place is inherently linked to identity. A reciprocal relationship exists between individuals and the places they inhabit such that humans shape places and places shape humans. A question for researchers of place concerns the balancing of these two considerations. To put it differently, is the influence of people on location more or less significant than the influence of location on people? To understand the strong relationships which occur

between people and places, geographers have distinguished between two distinct but interrelated components. The first of these concerns the identity *of* a place, and the second concerns an identity *with* a place. Relph's (1976) three core components for the identity of a place comprise the physical setting, the activities that occur there, and the meaning which is developed for these activities at this setting. The links between these three elements define the identity of a place for an individual or for a group. Relph (1976) observed that the identity of a place can exist longer than the circumstances that shaped that identity. As such the identity of a mountain or a town can persist through fundamental social and technological change, or even physical destruction.

Identity *with* place is central to the humanistic interest in a way of being. To be 'inside' or *of* a place involves a sense of belonging. It is argued in this thesis that many people moving to rural environments are seeking belonging (section 4.3.3) and that that belonging develops in different ways for different people (Sections 8.4.3 and 8.4.4). Part of the difficulty in conceptualising this notion of identity *with* place is that it may not be overtly known. One of the themes of place based geography is that identities with places may only become clear after places change, or become 'lost' (Read 1996). Studying the issue of belonging to place is complicated by its nature as an underlying, sometimes unconscious quality. It is nonetheless a crucial issue for study and debate in Australia, a nation where non-Indigenous Australians grapple with what it means to belong to this land, and Indigenous peoples continue to struggle to have their custodianship recognised.

2.4.6 Belonging to places

For Huggins et al. (1995), the concept of *place* is a powerful one which goes a long way towards capturing the identification that humans can have with their surrounds. Implicit in the discussion on belonging is variation in the extent to which people belong to places. For example, the type of association between people and place can be so strong that connection to a particular place is critical to the survival of culture and livelihood. Peter Read (2000) is interested in the level of belonging to place that is possible in Australia amongst non-indigenous Australians. He questions if his personal and family memories and above all his yearning to belong to country are adequate to fully belong to Australia. In the process, he considers what are the criteria for a deep state of belonging, and if some people have a greater right to belong than others. His work invokes a physical and spiritual journey around the country to listen to stories of the land and share experiences. It is through this process of listening and understanding that he learns that there are many ways to belong to places which intertwine and need to respect each other. Speaking of the Indigenous culture he has been learning about he writes: "We need the metaphors, the connections, the songs and the art. I need the Gai-mariagal stories, I need to believe that the voices in the river will never be silent, that the land bears our mark now as well as theirs" (p. 223). For Read, part of this reciprocal belonging is a need to recognise the custodianship of Indigenous peoples: "we can't share the land with them until they have the land to share with us". In terms of the relationship between belonging and sustainable natural resource management, it is important to acknowledge that belonging involves more than asserting a projected version of place onto a location or historical context. It necessitates a preparedness and

ability to listen to places – to be open to the meanings they already carry. Furthermore, belonging to country involves both respect and responsibility – a sense of being part of a place and a need to look after it.

2.4.7 Integrating society and nature: western philosophy and place as agenda

A principle of western philosophy since the enlightenment has been to create the illusion that humans are distinct from nature (Glacken 1967). This illusion has been considered one of the underlying challenges to sustainability and has been linked to overconfidence in technocratic approaches to managing natural resources (Davidson-Hunt and Berkes 2003; Passmore 1974; Plumwood 2002). In comparing modern and pre-modern societies, Relph (1976) suggested that the latter have a much higher awareness of their dependence upon nature for their survival. Relph (1976) suggested that in the pre-modern world, hunting or gathering food directly from nature emphasised the links between the cultural, natural and spiritual domains, all in the context of survival. By contrast, the modern world was criticised for segregating these realms. Relph argued that the world of drive through food outlets and convenience stores has hidden the connections between culture and nature. What developed was a world without meaning or without spirituality and this was what Relph meant by 'placelessness'. He used this term to represent the monotonous suburbs he observed and the attitudes that underpinned them: "Placelessness describes both an environment without significant places and the underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places." (Relph 1976, p. 143). This geography was one featuring rows of

identical houses that characterise an ‘inauthentic’ way of dwelling: one which focussed on efficiency for efficiency’s sake whilst hiding the relationships between people and their environment. For Relph (1976) the challenge was to find ways of connecting to places in the modern era.

One of the ways that people have attempted to acknowledge the links between social and natural systems is through bioregions. McTaggart (1993) argued that the notion of bioregion is about communities seeing themselves as ‘place-systems’. Influenced by systems theorists such as Checkland (1981) the proponents of ‘bioregion’ have argued that society and nature are integrated in distinct regions. These holistic regions have been generated through a process of co-evolution between social and natural systems (McTaggart 1993). The concepts of place and bioregion have featured notably in the discipline of ecological economics where the concept of place has been found to be useful to help quantify the links between people and the ecosystem services they make use of. For example, using the notion of place as bioregion, Hansson and Wackernagel (1999) seek to ‘re-embed’ social systems within ecological systems at a local scale. In this regard, the concept of place is part of an agenda to link social and ecological systems.

Another area where the concept of place has formed part of an ecological agenda concerns the science of complex systems and the principle of resilience. Representing the ability of a system to endure disturbance, the principle of resilience is considered crucial to sustainability amongst systems thinkers (Berkes et al. 2003). In seeking ways to develop resilience in complex systems, Davidson-Hunt and Berkes (2003) have

studied how a strong sense of place based on direct experience with one's local environment promotes social resilience. This in turn assists people to avoid ecological crises and cope with them better when they occur. Furthermore, they found that programs aimed at promoting sense of place through direct interaction with local environments can assist people to see their relationship with nature more clearly.

A further area where the concept of place has been proposed as part of an agenda concerns eco-feminism. For example, Plumwood (1993, 2002) has argued that that the dualism between humans and nature in western philosophy is also associated with further dualisms including male/female and reason/emotion. Ecofeminists argue that these dualisms have served the interests of a minority focussed on economic development, conquest and control. For Plumwood (2002) examining and re-thinking our connection with each other and our ecosystem is vital for human survival. In this context she advocates the concept of place to assist us in this process.

> "We must counter those maladaptive forms of reason that radically distance us from the non-human sphere and disguise or disappear our ecological embeddedness and vulnerability, in order to develop a communicative, place-sensitive culture which can situate humans ecologically and nonhumans ethically" (p. 239).

It is clear that for Plumwood (2002) the concept of place is part of the solution to the ecological and social problems of distinguishing humans and nature.

2.5 Problems associated with place

At a general level, the concept of place has been criticised for being vague (Rapoport 1994). In response to such a criticism, Stevanovic (1998, 2000) argues that the reason

place has not been strictly defined is because the holistic nature of the concept is inconsistent with precise definitions. It is argued here that the vagueness that Rapoport (1994) refers to is more productively considered a flexible and holistic quality. This quality is one of the reasons why the concept of place is proving so suitable questions of linking social and ecological sustainability.

2.5.1 Globalisation, locality and place

One problematic issue for place concerns globalism. In disciplines such as political geography and communicative planning a common critique of place concerns its failure to acknowledge that people define themselves in diverse and complex ways through the extensive links that are produced through modern communicative technologies. Confronted by interest in the role of the local scale in sustainability, these critics argue that focussing on the links between an individual and a single specific environment seem antiquated or nostalgic. Their criticisms focus on restrictive local and community attachments to places in denial of the far reaching modes of human communication. Healey captures this theme:

> Once, in the romantic nostalgias which some people still yearn for, some of us lived in a place-based community, a 'habitus' where our social relations were tied to particular groups and places. Our 'group' contained all our relational resources. In British local planning practice, the romantic gemeinshaft community is often evoked in local debate on the qualities of places. In these globalising days, when our relational webs connect us to a huge range of possible social relations and stores of knowledge and understanding, the notion of a place-based community falls apart and we are plunged into a multi-cultural world (Healey 1997, pp. 65-66).

No one can deny that the webs of connections associated with globalisation have radically changed the ways people think and relate to each other. Relationships with local places are not our *only* way of connecting with each other and nature. However, we still live in them and actively create them. As Casey (1996) has argued, to live is to live locally. Despite the global power struggles, the trans national movement of peoples, the permeability of boundaries and the uncertainty of locations, people still need attachments to their local places (Escobar 2001). In many ways, it is precisely the effects of globalism and modernism that have triggered the perceived need to re examine our relationships with the local regions we live in (Hansson and Wackernagel 1999). As such, it can be argued that there remains a strong need for studying the way we create places in a post-industrial world. This leads to a further important response to Healey's criticism. In addition to the local remaining a relevant dimension to human culture today, the concept of place has also adapted to the context of increased global communications and travel.

Considering the concept of place in a globalised world has been the subject of Massey's study on a global sense of place (1994). She acknowledged that it can be difficult to retain a sense of a local place in the context of unprecedented numbers of people moving and the exchange of ideas across distances. She agrees that longing for attachments to local places is an indication of the geographical fragmentation of our times and has triggered defensive reactions. These have included heightened forms of nationalism and prizing sanitised examples of 'heritage'. One of the main problems with this reactionary embrace of local place is that it assumes that the identities of places are fixed and inward looking. Massey rejects that in some former period local

places have been synonymous with coherent communities. Yet she also qualifies what we mean by globalisation today. Power relationships in society are such that not everybody has experienced increased movement or access to other places. In the context of increasing interest in the effects of globalisation, Massey (1994) argues that the concept of place offers much potential. It has already been argued that what gives a place its specific identity can be considered in terms of a particular set of social relations. That is to say the character of a place can be seen as focal point of ideas and human relationships rather than a set of rigid local boundaries. The changes that we have come to call globalisation can be seen as changes to these relationships and an expansion of the scale at which they occur, yet local constellations of these relationships give particular identities to places. For Massey (1994) globalisation is not simply a matter of homogenisation. Rather, it is a case of widening the sources of the unique combination of influences that comprise different places.

On the basis of her consideration of globalisation, Massey (1994) highlights some important lessons for the concept of place. She emphasises the dynamic nature of places. This has some important implications for natural resource management. Characteristics of environments or practices which are accepted as taken for granted can be misleading – these characteristics have developed over time and may change further. If the identity of a place features strong continuity over time, it is because it is constantly being re-created – maintaining features of the past is the result of actions in the present. In addition, the principle that places are defined by relationships rather than boundaries is important for natural resource management because relationships are

dynamic. This makes the concept of place relevant to changes towards a sustainable relationship between people and their environment.

2.5.2 Unsustainable places

In discussing the context for place in natural resource management, it has been argued in section 1.2 of this thesis that sense of place is highly relevant to sustainability, due to such issues as its link to social learning and its inherently integrated nature. An important problem of the concept for place is the trap of oversimplifying and exaggerating the relationship between thinking of environments as places and developing sustainable relationships with natural systems. Moore (1997) acknowledges that the lack of a sense of place is strongly associated with unsustainable relationships with natural resources. Yet she also observed that whilst a strong sense of place may be an essential ingredient to developing more sustainable relationship between culture and nature, merely having a sense of a place is no guarantee of adopting changes to behaviour. She sees sense of place as a necessary but insufficient condition for a sustainable interaction between humans and nature. What emerges from Moore's observation is a need to better understand *how* people relate to places. This is something she has considered in her own work with farmers in the Western Australian wheat belt, finding that being associated with productive agricultural land was an important part of identity for her participants (Moore 1997). These observations have played a role in shaping the research questions of this thesis (section 1.6), focussed on the questions of influences on sense of place, behaviour in practice and learning.

2.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the background to the concept of place and considered its conceptual relevance today. The chapter has discussed different approaches to the concept of place including humanistic concerns of enhancing human experience, political concerns of exploring the power dimensions of places. In addition, the chapter has discussed the roles of identity, time and belonging, and showed how the concept of place can play a role in an agenda to explore the links between social and ecological systems. It is in this context that the thesis explores the influences on people's sense of place, how these translate in practice, and what this informs about the way people learn about their environments.

Chapter 3 Methodology and methods

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Introduction

Chapter two has shown that interest in the concept of place comes from a variety of disciplines and theoretical backgrounds. It follows that the range of methods for studying place is correspondingly broad. Several key works on sense of place employ phenomenological and symbolic interactionist methodologies. For example Relph's (1976) classic work *Place and Placelessness* emphasises studying the lived world of immediate experience. He declares that his purpose is to "explore place as a phenomenon of the geography of the lived-world of our everyday lives." (Relph 1976, p. 6). Other approaches draw on the work of Berger and Luckman (1967) to show how places are socially constructed. For example Greider and Garkovich (1994) emphasise the cultural construction of environments and Williams and Patterson (1999) show how environments are constructed differently by different people. Increased interest in the symbolic significance of places has followed the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York, sparking a special issue of the Journal of Environmental Psychology on the symbolic nature of places (Canter 2001). This thesis has shown in sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 that the way a place is socially constructed reflects dimensions of power in society. This has led to the development of critical methodologies for analysing these power dimensions. For example, Gururani (2002) shows how colonial processes in the

Kumaon Himalayas, associated with forced labour and male out migration, led to the construction of forests as valuable resources rather than cultured places.

Another broad group of approaches to place draws on positivist methods of hypothesis testing and quantification. For example, Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) propose a scale against which they measured the different types of attachment to place held by Lakeshore property owners in Wisconsin. Similarly, Hidalgo and Hernanndez (2001) measured the level of attachment to places in different spatial categories in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain.

3.1.2 Construction and reality

One thing these approaches to studying place have in common is the notion of an independent reality. Proponents of the place concept have consistently included the independent physical characteristics of places as an important component of their definition. For example, Relph (1976, p. 3) notes that '…location as it relates to other things and places, is absolutely fundamental… *place* involves an integration of elements of nature and culture.' Similarly, Brandenburg and Carroll (1995, p. 384) have stated that places "… are composed of actual physical environments or settings and all that occurs in that setting".

This thesis maintains that places are real *and* constructed. Dual positions such as this are being increasingly legitimated through emerging theory, and a restrictive *either/or* debate between realist and constructivist positions is fading from relevance. Recent work in Environmental Sociology has made a case that environments and the issues

associated with them can be both real and constructed, and that the complex category of issues which characterise the relationships between humans and their environments requires creativity and flexibility in theoretical approach (Irwin 2001).

3.1.3 Purpose of the research and rationale for approach

There are many reasons for using the concept of place in social research. Some researchers have a political motivation for exposing and criticizing constructions of place that reflect inequality (see for example Huggins et al. 1995). Others approach the study of place to encourage dialogue and critical reflection on the relationships between people and their environments with a broader interest in culturally appropriate resource management (for example Greider and Garkovich 1994). The primary purpose of this research is closer to the second group of research, in that it aims to develop understanding on how people develop attachments to places. Whilst the primary purpose of this research is concerned with developing the concept of place, a secondary purpose of the work is to discuss implications of this research for policy. As Woodhill and Röling (1998) have argued, sustainability is strongly tied to improving human ability and propensity to make our interaction with natural resources more compatible with natural processes. The aim of this research is to advance thinking on the processes involved in understanding environments. Underlying this is the principle that developing human capacity to change involves a deeper understanding of what influences people's understanding of their environments. To gain the necessary depth of understanding, the methods for this thesis employed a qualitative research approach,

which has the advantage of asking people to describe issues of importance to them in detail (Neuman 1997; Patton 2002).

3.1.4 Qualitative approach

A qualitative approach to methodology is strongly suited to gaining a deeper understanding of the meanings that places have for different people and involves listening to people speak about significant experiences. Schroeder explains the approach:

> To gain this understanding, we must look back to the experience in which people's values originate. We must listen to people speak in their own words about their experiences, and try to grasp what those experiences are like for them (Schroeder 1996, p. 20).

Central to this approach to research is allowing participants to speak in their own terms and convey their ideas to their best ability. In this study, the qualitative approach involved listening to participants recount anecdotes and describe situations that have greatly influenced their sense of self and sense of place. Sometimes participants were at a loss for words to communicate deeply held convictions and attachments. For this reason, a high degree of flexibility was maintained during the interviews. When participants had difficulty describing something, I asked them to draw it, show me a photograph or to take me to where something happened on the property. This in turn assisted them to express themselves verbally, because the images, artefacts and locations served as prompts for further discussion.

3.1.5 Adaptive theory

The diversity of methods adopted by researchers on sense of place, and their emphasis on tying these methods to physical locations, emphasise that one of the main purposes of research on place is to address practical issues. With this in mind, many researchers take a pragmatic, rather than theory driven approach to methods. The methods designed for this thesis share this pragmatic approach, and broadly follow 'adaptive theory' as a basic approach to the research (Layder 1998). Sitting mid way between hypothesis testing and theoretical induction, adaptive theory emphasises acknowledging pre-existing concepts but still focusing on an inductive process to expand or rethink these concepts. By comparing existing concepts with practical studies, the approach is well suited to linking theory with practice.

3.1.6 Background concepts

The starting point for adaptive theory is to identify and consider relevant concepts to the study. There are three background concepts that have been identified as illuminating the current study. The most important of these is Piaget's twin principles of assimilation and accommodation. Also of significance is the role of time in place, and the role of experiential interaction in influencing how people construct place. It is important to emphasise that in adaptive theory, the role of these concepts is not to form the basis for developing hypotheses which are later tested. Rather, the emphasis is on identifying concepts which may inform, and be informed by the research question at hand.

3.1.6.1 Assimilation and accommodation

In introducing this thesis, it was mentioned that existing research on constructing place has identified some early indications about the processes people undertake to develop their sense of place (section 1.5). Much of this interest is concerned with the principles of structuring knowledge. Relph (1976) drew particular attention to Piaget's (1971) distinction between the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation. The first of these refers to the process of fitting the external world into the mental structures that have already been created and the latter refers to adjusting these structures to accommodate them to external objects. Using these principles, Relph (1976) suggested that developing a sense of place involves a continual balancing of observations with expectations and pre-existing ideas with new information:

> For the existential insider this process of balancing assimilation and accommodation is, of course, quite unselfconscious, for there is a gradual and subtle development of an identity with and of his (sic) place that begins in childhood and continues throughout life (Relph 1976, p. 60).

Whilst Piaget has done extensive work on the function of these principles in developmental psychology, their specific role in developing sense of place is the interest of this research. In introducing this thesis several questions were raised concerning the extent to which accommodation and assimilation are balanced, and what triggers them (section 1.5). These questions have underpinned the line of inquiry taken in this thesis. Whilst not all of these questions could be fully answered, the findings discussed in chapters four to six provide a basis for some conclusions about assimilation and accommodation in chapter eight (section 8.4.1).

3.1.6.2 Time in place

In addition to the processes of assimilation and accommodation, time in place has also been raised as a potentially significant issue. Hay (1998) has shown that the degree to which people are attached to a place varies according to the length of time they have been there. Building on Tuan's (1980) notion of rootedness, Hay (1998) has shown that sense of place is qualitatively different for recent arrivals and for people who have lived in a place all their life. Further research suggests that a person's familiarity with a location affects the relative importance of social or natural components of a sense of place. Cantrill and Senecah (2001) suggest that relative newcomers to a place are more likely to view their relationship to that location as independent of social relations, whereas people with a longer duration exhibit a stronger level of social interdependence.

3.1.6.3 Experiential interaction

Another area of research on processes for constructing place emphasizes the importance of the activities which are conducted at these locations. In essence, people are influenced by what place means for them. The basis for these approaches lay in symbolic interactionism, which emphasises how the identity of a place varies according to different people and different cultures (Greider and Garkovich 1994). In a recent example, of this type of approach Eisenhauer, Krannich and Dale (2000) show how the way people develop an understanding of 'special places' on public lands is dependent upon what it was that they came there to do.

3.2 Case studies

The methods for this thesis involved exploring the research questions through case studies of Woodstock and the Atherton Tablelands. The Woodstock case study was commenced in March 2001 and was intended to be a first stage study that on one hand provided empirical insight into the questions posed by this thesis, and on the other hand provided methodological insights for the second case study. Following an initial analysis of the Woodstock study, the Atherton Tablelands was commenced in August 2001. Following the second study, the Woodstock interviews were further analysed in greater detail.

3.2.1 First case study: Woodstock, north Queensland

The first case study involved interviewing members of the small rural community of Woodstock, close to Townsville, north Queensland (figure 3.1). Woodstock is mostly made up of cattle graziers and crop growers (figure 3.2). In the past this area was resting point for people travelling between Townsville and the gold mining community of Charters Towers. It also served as supply of timber and charcoal to the mining and transportation industries.

The guiding questions for the Woodstock interviews focused on tracking change over time including how and why participants came to be in places, how long they had been there, their early memories of the place and how the place had changed over time (see Appendix 1). The study consisted of in depth interviews with nine people, each lasting between 45 minutes and 2 1/2 hours.

Figure 3.1 Case study 1: Woodstock north Queensland

© CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (reproduced with permission)

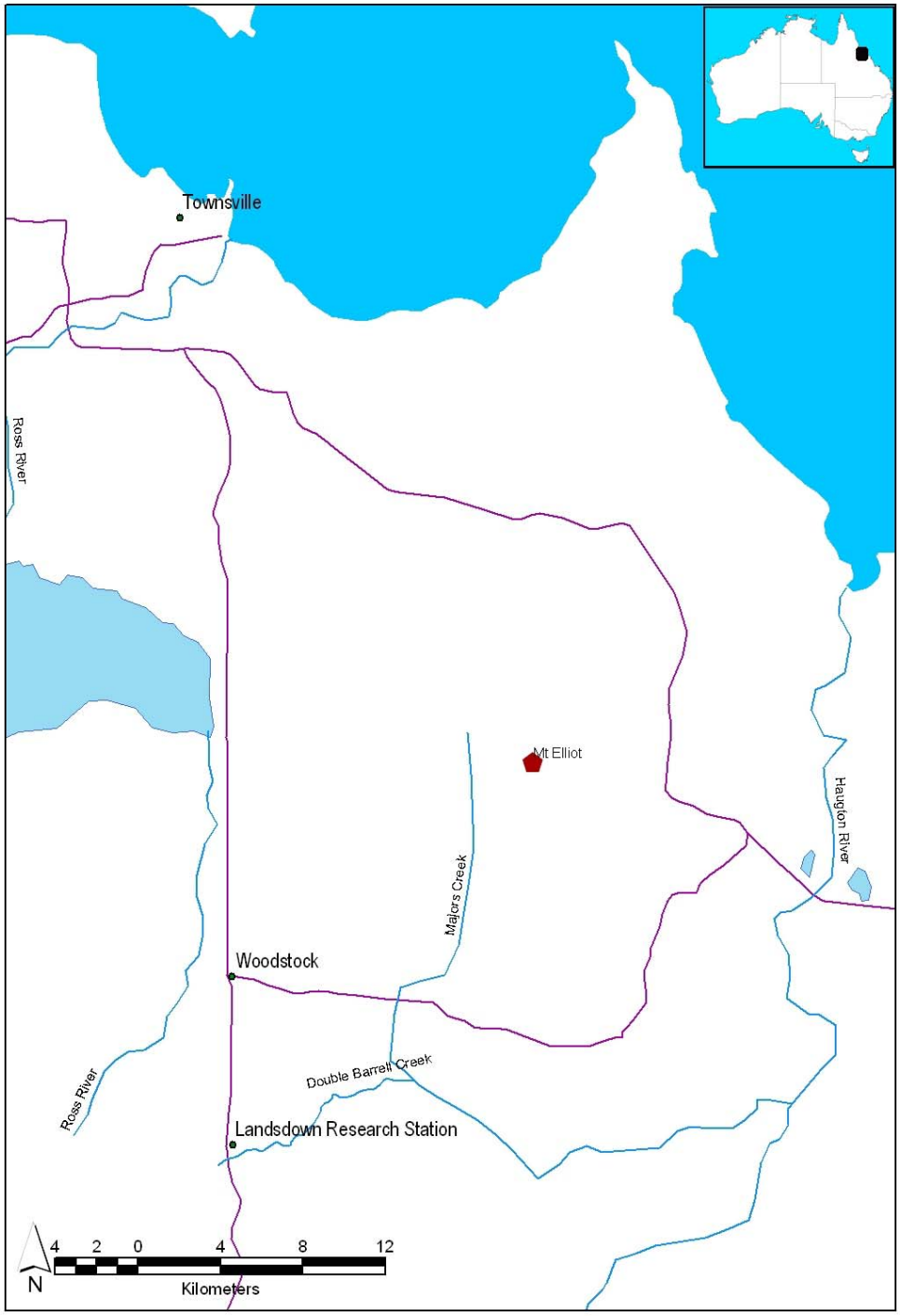


Figure 3.2 Mustering in Woodstock

© CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (reproduced with permission)

The preliminary analysis of the Woodstock interviews was fundamental in developing the Atherton Tablelands study. Of key interest was the variability of how people came to be in the place. Early analysis showed differences in place construction between people who were born and raised in the area and those who arrived there as adults. Of those who came later, there were differences between those who deliberately selected the area after rejecting other places, and those who ended up there for some other reason. Asking people about change provided considerable data. However, it was difficult at first to organize the data into meaningful categories. Asking people about their memories of the place was of less value because this encouraged long tangents of limited relevance to the study. Two further areas were consistently raised by

participants in the study. The first of these concerns comparisons. A larger proportion of participants drew very heavily on comparisons with attachments to other places as a means of understanding and describing their attachment to Woodstock. The second theme was that the way many people conceptualised their place was dependent upon social relations above any other consideration. This was repeatedly phrased as a 'sense of community' and led to a stronger emphasis on this aspect of place in the second case study.

Intersecting with many of the above processes were the two themes of imposing a construction of place on an environment and generating a construction from inherent features of place. The first of these themes refers to the focussing of activities to shape a particular landscape, of which the most common in the Woodstock study was shaping a pastoral environment. Efforts to modify environment included removing inherent elements of places such as native vegetation and invasive weed species (of non-native origin). Attempts to shape places also included additions to the landscape, both in terms of the commercial species (cattle, horses) and non-commercial introductions such as trees for shade and aesthetic reasons. The second theme, generating a construction from the inherent features of place, mostly involved observing native wildlife and plant populations, and physical processes involving hydrology and fire. Some participants adapted their deliberate constructions to be compatible with their understandings of natural processes. For example after decades of observing vegetation change, one family retired certain sections of the farm from production to encourage the growth of native trees. Not all interviews indicated these two types of processes. Whilst for some people there was a balance between imposing a construction of an environment and

adapting behaviour to suit inherent aspects of place, for others, there was no evidence of becoming aware of the inherent aspects of place: there was merely an imposed construction.

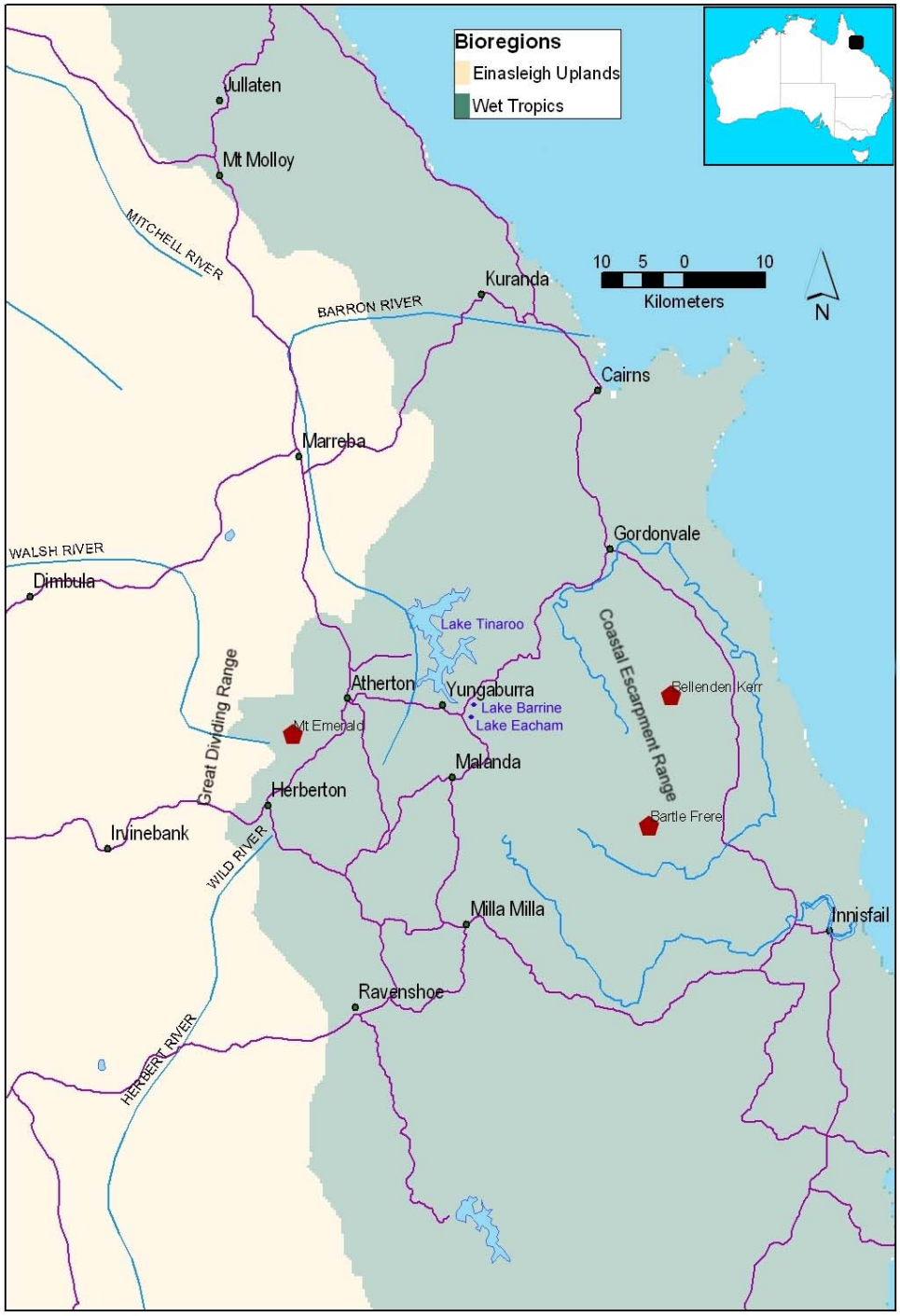
Early analysis of the Woodstock study also provided evidence of a distinction between people who were born and raised in the place and those who came to it later. For example, people who were born and raised in a place tended not to make comparisons with other places. Moreover, people who came to a place to conduct a specific activity seemed less flexible in their construction of place. An example of this phenomenon was a family who came to the area expressly to graze cattle. Whilst other graziers had a complex relationship which considered social, environmental and economic considerations, this family's relationship with place focused exclusively on constructing an environment suitable for grazing. In constructing their sense of self, these participants declared that they had 'cattle in the blood'.

3.2.2 Second case study: the Atherton Tablelands

The second study was developed to further explore the emerging insights from the Woodstock study in the larger and more complicated region of the Atherton Tablelands. This area is a tropical highland inland from Cairns in northern Australia (figure 3.3). The district is situated on an elevated plateau between two mountain ranges: the Great Dividing Range and a coastal range known as the escarpment. The natural environment

Figure 3.3 Case Study 2: Atherton Tablelands

© CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (reproduced with permission)



features considerable ecological diversity due to its widely varying rainfall, vegetation, soil types and topography. Participants in this study made a strong distinction between the wet and dry sides of the Atherton Tablelands, represented in figure 3.3 by the two bioregions of Einasleigh Uplands and Wet Tropics.

The region also features great diversity in cultures and land uses, resulting in many different versions of the Tablelands, such that the Atherton Tablelands represents a range of experiences rather than a strictly defined community. Many people indicated that the Tablelands are located strictly between the two mountain ranges, but participants in Dimbulah saw themselves as part of the Tablelands despite the fact that they are located west of the Great Dividing Range.

This region was selected for a suite of reasons. Of particular note is that the people who live there have a strong and reasonably consistent sense of this area as a distinct region. When the term 'the Tablelands' was mentioned to anyone participating in the study there was instant recognition of a location, a range of land uses and other cultural activities, and a social fabric that is quite distinct. The term 'Atherton Tablelands' was full of meaning to the people encountered in this study. Everyone I spoke to was confident in their own minds about where the Atherton Tablelands were and what 'the Tablelands' meant to them. This was partly because there are some key features in the region's physical geography that make it a relatively discreet region. These focus on the region being an elevated plateau between two mountain ranges with a number of defined roads into and out of the place. In addition, several aspects to the region were universally agreed upon as being distinctly Atherton Tablelands places, such as the

towns of Atherton and Malanda and the volcanic crater lakes of Lake Eacham (figure 3.4) and Lake Barrine. The significance of these features varied widely depending upon people's perspectives and Indigenous people knew many of these features by different names, yet there was enough in common for all participants to agree that these

Figure 3.4 Lake Eacham, Atherton Tablelands

© CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (reproduced with permission)

were part of a place called the Atherton Tablelands. So whilst the case study had some generally agreed features and dimensions, there were as many 'versions' of the Atherton Tablelands as there were people. For some it was dairy country, for others it was tribal lands. For others still it was a place of nature conservation and outdoor recreation. The diversity in culture and environment within the Atherton Tablelands encourages widely

varying attachments to the landscapes and communities of the area. Ultimately it was this combination of being a relatively distinct region with a rich diversity of identity that made the Atherton Tablelands such a valuable case study for investigating the concept of place.

One of the features of this region is that coming to it necessitates a noticeable transition. There are many routes to the Atherton Tablelands but each of them requires ascending a mountain range.

Figure 3.5 Millaa Millaa Lookout at the top of the Escarpment Range

© CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (reproduced with permission)

Travelling up and down the windy mountain roads through the rainforests in the east involves changes evident to all the senses. As one participant puts it:

> A11F1: ... you come up the Gillies Highway and you have these magnificent views over sort of rainforest type bush… it changes from spartan sort of bush to more rainforest bush and you look out ... there's mountains and the sky is clear blue and then you come up and turn off and you drive towards Lake Eacham and then just ... like this canopy of rainforest that you're driving through... it's just gorgeous.

For the researcher, the significance of this became more apparent with each successive field trip. Participants who took part in the study frequently described a sense of coming home when they smelt the rainforest or felt the cool moist air as they were driving up the range. As a researcher, the transition between the highlands and the coast served a useful function in conducting the research. Driving up and down the range came to symbolize the distinction between fieldwork and analysis, between activity and reflection. Descending through the forest was particularly useful at the end of each period of fieldwork for thinking about the people and places I had encountered over the previous period of fieldwork.

In addition to its natural diversity the region features considerable cultural diversity. The cultures include the Barbarrum and Ngadjonji peoples. The Barbarrum people live in the drier country around the Great Dividing Range and have recently been successful in having Native Title recognized on their country. The Ngadjonji people belong to rainforest country which partially overlaps with the World Heritage Area and includes Lake Eacham, the upper Russell River, the area around Malanda and Mount Bartle Frere.

The non-Indigenous settlement history of the area dates from the 1880s and initially focused on the mining and dairy industries (figure 3.6). Gold and tin mining near the current towns of Herberton and Dimbulah attracted a significant population to the Tablelands in the late nineteenth century. Government support for closer settlement and timber production encouraged clearing and harvesting of native forests from the early twentieth century (Frawley 1988).

Figure 3.6 Dairy farming near Millaa Millaa circa 1915

Image supplied by Eacham Historical Society (reproduced with permission)

The dairy industry expanded throughout the twentieth century due to technical advances in agriculture and further land clearing (figure 3.7). However, this expanse has slowed due to changes to the economic viability of the industry since the de-regulation of milk prices. Timber production increased in the decades following the Second World War

Figure 3.7 Land clearing by bulldozer for the dairy industry, near Malanda
Image supplied by participant A20M (reproduced with permission)

supported by a Crown log supply quota system and technical advances in machinery which made the harvesting of further species commercially viable (Frawley 1988). Logging activity was stopped when the State Forests of the Atherton Tablelands were included in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988 (WTMA 2003). The Atherton Tablelands also feature a significant influence from Southern European immigrants who arrived in the 1950s to work in the drier irrigated country west of Lake Tinnaroo. These immigrants have concentrated around Mareeba and Dimbulah and have a history which echoes the experiences of migrants in other parts of Australia. Their story focuses on enduing harsh conditions on arrival that they overcame to rebuild their lives in a new place.

A further element to the cultural diversity of the Atherton Tablelands is a thriving alternative lifestyle focused on the towns of Herberton and Ravenshoe and to a lesser extent Malanda. For example, the community of Walsh River consists of approximately 200 people who live in the Great Dividing Range near Herberton. Rejecting many principles of mainstream society these people live with simple infrastructure and minimal interaction with the rest of society.

Land uses in the Atherton Tablelands include intensive cattle grazing for the dairy industry around the towns of Millaa Millaa and Malanda. More extensive grazing for the beef industry occurs throughout the Atherton Tablelands. Further land uses include crops such as sugar, coffee, mangos, avocados and corn as well as cut flowers. From the 1950s to the 1990s tobacco was an important crop in the drier, irrigated country near Dimbulah, however, de-regulation of this industry has led to the industry becoming unviable in this region (figure 3.8).

A significant land use in the Atherton Tablelands is conservation in the form of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area incorporating the State Forests in the escarpment range and the National Parks around volcanic lakes such as Lake Eacham and Lake Barrine (figure 3.9). The appeal of the World Heritage Area is leading to the development of a further land use in the form of tourism. Many of these tourists visit the Tablelands from their base in Cairns.

Figure 3.8 Tobacco growing near Dimbulah

© CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (reproduced with permission)

Figure 3.9 Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

© Wet Tropics Management Authority (reproduced with permission)

.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Confidentiality

Studying sense of place is deeply personal. The people who agreed to participate in this research invited me into their homes, showed me around their places and shared experiences that have shaped their lives. Some participants were concerned about being identified through this study. These were a minority, however, most participants wanted certain aspects of the interviews to be kept confidential. To manage the issue of confidentiality, I paid careful attention to principles developed by qualitative researchers (Patton 2002; Marshall and Rossman 1999). Prior to commencing each interview, I negotiated with participants about how our discussion would be recorded and how data could be presented in the thesis. I emphasised that participants were able to review our agreement about confidentiality at any stage of the interview. Most participants agreed to the interviews being tape-recorded on the basis that at any point they could stop the recording or erase comments. The pre-interview discussion assisted developing the level of trust that was necessary to share experiences about symbolic places. Following this discussion people opened up to share deeply personal experiences and showed me the places, artefacts and images associated with their experiences. On several occasions, participants found that describing the influences on their sense of place helped them to express things that they had previously felt but not been able to put into words. In the process of describing their experiences, sometimes

participants said things they never intended to. Where requested, these comments have been omitted from the thesis.

Several participants requested not to be named in the thesis. To help protect these people's identities, a system of codes was devised for all participants. The structure of these codes is made up:

- a letter to indicate which case study ('A' for Atherton, 'W' for Woodstock);
- a number which represents the order in which the interview took place, (i.e. A2 was after A1 and before A3);
- a letter to represent gender ('M' for male, 'F' for female); and
- an additional number when there was more than one male or female who took part in the interview.

For example, participant W1M was a man from Woodstock and participants A11F1 and A11F2 were two women from the Atherton Tablelands who were interviewed together.

3.3.2 Sampling

The study employed a non-probability form of sampling known as purposeful sampling (Patton 2002). The logic behind this approach is to select a series of information rich cases to study in detail. The size of the sample is not pre-determined. Ideally, sampling is complete when new data cease to provide new information or understanding. What is more likely is that the qualitative researcher will run out of time or money before this point is reached (Layder 1998; Patton 2002).

Purposeful sampling is not intended to be representative in any statistical sense. However, in seeking information rich cases in Woodstock and the Atherton Tablelands, sampling has aimed to reflect the cultural and demographic diversity of these regions (within the time and cost limits of the study). To assist me select information rich cases I spent considerable time talking to representatives of organisations and attending community events (this is further discussed in section 3.3.6). In addition to this, at the end of each interview, a discussion was held between the researcher and participant to consider who else might be suitable for research and why they may make suitable cases. This presented the researcher with access to a large number of people from a diversity of backgrounds from which to approach potential participants. This technique involved a referral process so interviewees were not approached 'cold'. The principal advantage of the referral was that it increased trust between the researcher and participant.

The 17 women and 23 men (40 people in total) who agreed to participate in the study represented a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds including Anglo, Barburrum, Celtic, German, Italian, and Ngadjonji. They represented several land uses including beef grazing, conservation, dairy farming, intensive cropping, rural residential and forestry. Furthermore, they represented an equally broad range of roles and professions, including extension officers, farmers, foresters, rangers, retirees, researchers, tourist operators and traditional elders. They include both people who grew up in the case study locations and people who moved there during adulthood. The time that the participants had been living in the place of the interview varied from approximately 6 months to 80 years. A summary of participants' basic attributes is

presented in Table 3.1. To maintain confidentiality, time in place has been listed as approximate values and some data have been presented as 'unidentified'.

3.3.3 Interviews

Fieldwork consisted of in depth interviews varying in length from 45 minutes to 4 hours. The interviews were semi-structured, using a suite of open ended questions to stimulate discussion around a series of themes. In addition to the guiding questions, I asked additional questions to gain greater depth on issues of possible relevance to the research. For example, in one interview, it appeared that participants described one set of reasons for coming to the Atherton Tablelands and another set of reasons for continuing to stay there. In attempting to understand the nature of this personal change, I asked the following question:

> I: …but the initial reasons for coming here, are they the reasons you stay or are the reasons you stay different reasons?
>
> A12M: That's a good point… I suppose the original reasons still do apply but there's others we found…

The interviews started by discussing very broad considerations of how people became attached to their place, stimulated by the open ended guiding questions. Participants were left to talk extensively and creatively in response to the question. This then provided the basis for more refined questions seeking further clarification of explanation of the underlying influences on people's sense of place.

Table 3.1 Participant codes and basic attributes

Participant	Role / Occupation	Place of longest duration during childhood	Duration in place of interview (approximate)
W1M	Research technician	Unidentified rural area outside of case study	30 years
W2F	Grazier	Family farm near Woodstock	50 years
W2M	Grazier	Family farm near Woodstock	55 years
W3M	Grazier	Family farm outside of case study area	20 years
W3F	Shop keeper	Unidentified urban area	20 years
W4F	Vet	Family farm, coastal Queensland	3 years
W5M	Tradesman	Family farm near Woodstock	80 years
W6M	Grazier	Family farm near Woodstock	60 years
W7M	Potato grower	Family farm near Woodstock	50 years
A1F	Community worker	Rural property in South Australia.	3 years
A2M	Tourism operator	Family property near Dimbulah	25 years
A2F	Tourism operator	Brisbane	4 years
A3F	Dairy farmer	Family sugar cane farm, coastal Queensland	20 years
A4M	Grazier	Family farm in Germany	8 years
A5M	Mango producer	Family property, western Atherton Tablelands	40 years
A6M	Apprentice artist	Barbarrum Country, near Herberton	25 years
A7M	Research technician	Brisbane	3 years
A8F	Extension officer	Unidentified rural area outside case study	13 years
A9M	Conservation officer	Bush property, near Brisbane	3 years
A9F1	Conservationist	Unidentified rainforest (outside case study)	3 years
A9F2	Naturopath	Unidentified (outside case study)	3 years
A10M	Forester	Atherton Tablelands (multiple properties)	80 years
A11F1	Community worker	Rural New Zealand	3 years
A11F2	Administrator	Urban New Zealand	1 year
A12F	Nurse, flower farmer	Dairy farm (outside case study area)	5 years
A12M	Ship pilot, flower farmer	Urban environment (multiple locations)	5 years
A13M	Retired academic	Unidentified (outside of case study)	20 years
A14M	Extension officer	Unidentified (outside of case study)	6 months
A14F	Unidentified	Unidentified (outside of case study)	6 months
A15F	Author	Family farm in Wales	1 year
A16M	Dairy farmer	Family farm near Malanda	50 years
A17F	Retired dairy farmer	Family farm near Millaa Millaa	60 years
A17M	Retired dairy farmer	Family farm near Millaa Millaa	60 years
A18M	Minister of Religion	Country town, USA	10 years
A19F	Dairy farmer	Dairy farm in southern Queensland	13 years
A20M	Forester	Rural community near Malanda	52 years
A21M	Coffee producer	Family farm in Italy	55 years
A21F	Coffee producer	Family farm near Mareeba	50 years
A22M	Grape grower	Rural community near Herberton	70 years
A23M	Traditional elder	Ngadjon country, near Malanda	50 years

Significant relationships amongst participants:

Marriages: W2F = W2M; W3F = W3M; A2F = A2M; A9F1 = A9M; A12F = A12M; A14F = A14M; A17F = A17M

Parent-child: A21F is daughter of A21M

3.3.4 Semi structured guiding themes

The guiding questions in the Woodstock study were very broad and aimed at generating a rich and involved discussion on the themes of identity and place (see Appendix 1). Initial analysis of these interviews provided the basis for the guiding questions in the Atherton Tablelands case study (see Appendix 2). The themes of duration, coming to be in place and observation of change were retained because these encouraged people to talk about the influences on their sense of place. The question asking people about their early memories of place was removed because it led to conversations that departed from the concept of sense of place. Based on the experience of the Woodstock study, specific questions were added for asking people about the nature of their activities and the significance of comparisons with other places. Also added was a question about the importance of a sense of community and a question at the end of the interview to see if there were other influences that were overlooked by the rest of the questions. This final question asked participants to identify key influences on the way they construct place in their own terms.

3.3.5 Data

The data of this research consisted of three sources: transcripts of interviews, reflections directly following the interviews and notes taken during the interviews. All but three participants agreed to the interview being recorded and subsequently transcribed. For those who rejected the use of a tape recorder detailed notes were taken during the interview. Summary notes were also taken during the recorded interviews and have

served two main purposes. First, they permitted the researcher to keep a record of the conversation as it unfolded which proved to be important for returning to topics for clarification during the interview. Second, these notes have been used to clarify the transcriptions when the tape was unclear. The final data source was reflections and impressions written by the researcher immediately following each interview as a way of recording any pertinent information stored in short term memory. These included observations about the circumstances of the interview and non-verbal communication such as body language. During transcription, further impressions were recorded as a first step towards analysis.

Where possible, the interviewer encouraged people to walk or drive around place during the interview. The most significant advantage of this approach was to encourage discussion through visual stimuli – describing experiences based on the sights encountered. This in turn provided material for the interviewer to ask follow up questions to help uncover a deeper level of data. An additional advantage of travelling around place during the interview was to link people's discussion to something visible or tangible. Some of these tours took place in vehicles and others on foot. When it was not possible to tour the place, the interviewer asked participants to gesture towards or otherwise indicate the locations of things they described. This worked very effectively for one participant who was physically disabled, and who showed me the whole property from the verandas stretching around the house.

3.3.6 Context and triangulation

During the fieldwork period, careful attention was paid to contextual data to assist with triangulation of the interviews. The purpose of this triangulation was not so much to determine the validity of a particular viewpoint. Rather it was to assist develop an understanding of the context in which to interpret people's comments. Becoming familiar with contextual data involved studying local media and attending local community events. This process commenced prior to the interviews and continued until they were finished. Examples of the process include:

- Reading local press (four local newspapers)
- Attending community events (e.g. international women's day, church fetes)
- Visiting local markets (e.g. Yungaburra market, Mareeba market)
- Attending Landcare meetings (multiple groups)
- Meetings with local conservation groups
- Meetings with local government employees (discussion of local issues)
- Meetings with State Government staff (conservation, primary industries)

Detailed notes from these experiences assisted me build up a better picture of the region and the tensions within it. In addition to providing context, many of these activities also provided the opportunity for residents to ask me about my research project, and for me to discuss with people the possibility of conducting an interview. For example, participant A14M was interested in participating in the research after meeting me at a Landcare field day. I approached participant A5M after reading an article in a local

newspaper and I approached participant A17F after attending a community meeting about the role of women in rural communities.

To assist triangulation between interviews, the recording of interview data was designed in accordance with qualitative fieldwork guidelines, including the separation of interview transcripts and my impressions about the interview (Patton 2002; Werner and Schoepfle 1987). In discussing what constitute the data for this project in section 3.3.5, it was shown how during the interviews I took summary notes that helped me remember themes to investigate further at a later point of the interview. In addition, immediately after each interview, I recorded my impressions of what each participant said and details of the circumstances of the interview such as how I came to meet the person, how the interview was negotiated, where it took place and how long it lasted. During analysis, the transcripts of the interviews were compared with these notes and my impressions of the interview, thus providing a means of assisting interpretation of the data.

Another form of triangulation involved the comparisons between respondents who spoke on the same topic. This was possible within interviews (for interviews with more than one participant) and between interviews (people talking about similar themes). Once again, the aim was to situate people's comments in their context, and thus assist interpretation.

3.3.7 Analysis

Analysis of the transcripts and field notes was developed in accordance with guidelines for identifying core consistencies and groups of meanings in qualitative data (Patton

2002). The approach followed grounded theory in that it has involved inducting explanatory frameworks that emerge from categorizing the meaning in the data (Charmanz 2000). However, it departed from grounded theory in developing an explanatory system of codes, it considered the role of the underlying theoretical context of the study (Layder 1998). This involved a constant dialogue between the data and the questions of this study. Data were analysed and coded with these questions in mind, and at the same time analysis involved evaluating whether the questions asked by the researcher needed to be adapted in light of the data. These questions (developed in chapter one) focus on the three themes: what are the influences on sense of place, how do these influence activities in practice, and what does this show about learning.

Because the objective of the project was to investigate the ways people understand their environments, and how these understandings have developed, the researcher was not focussed on assessing the data as either true of false. The approach adopted involved an attempt to view the world as seen by the respondent to the best of my ability, and identify the experiences they considered to have strongly influenced their sense of place. Borrowing the concept of 'bracketing' from phenomenology, the researcher attempted to suspend assessments of whether the data made sense to the researcher's own understanding of reality whilst gathering the data. The emphasis was on stepping inside and outside the 'realities' of the interviewees to draw comparisons with the constructions of different participants (Gubrium and Holstein 2000; Patton 2002).

Analysis involved three principal stages. With the assistance of a qualitative analysis software program (NVivo), the first stage involved a pre-analysis process of organising

the data into a system of basic codes that matched the intrinsic design of the study. Ordering the data this way facilitated considering who said what to which question. It also facilitated comparing the transcriptions with observations taken immediately after the interview. Furthermore it facilitated comparing the responses of different participants to any given question. The intrinsic structure of the study provided the starting point for the next stage of analysis.

The second phase was an inductive analysis of the transcription data, informed by the notes taken during the interview and my impressions recorded immediately afterwards. The aim was to explore relationships between different comments, and develop an in depth understanding of data. This inductive phase involved carefully reading the transcribed data and ascribing flexible categories to represent the meanings of the data. Some of these categories were matched to the interview guiding questions, thus representing an evolving set of responses that was updated each time a further transcript was analysed this way. Other insightful comments occurred at different stages of the interview, such as the opening or closing remarks of participants. Because the interviews followed a series of themes rather than a strict set of questions, it was not always immediately clear where some insightful comments belonged, and these were coded separately until a relationship became apparent with other sets of responses. This was facilitated by the qualitative analysis software, which facilitated comparing and linking themes. As further transcriptions were analysed in this way, many codes were added and some were merged or removed as a deeper understanding of the data was developed. The process also required repeatedly revisiting coded transcripts to reconsider aspects of them in light of reading further interviews. This process was

undertaken over the period of nine months and led to the development of 287 interlinked codes that characterised the many and complex responses to the questions and serendipitous insights that emerged throughout the interviews (listed in Appendix 3). It must be emphasised that the role of these codes was to assist me develop a deep understanding of the data, and that the software was not intended to be used to make decisions about the analysis.

The third stage of analysis involved grouping the complexity of the second stage into a smaller number of explanatory themes. The process involved first returning to each of the transcripts, considering the various ways they were coded and writing a synthesised summary to the core research questions for each transcript. These responses were then grouped and re-grouped until a series of themes was arrived at. Deciding upon the final set of themes involved balancing several considerations. One issue to balance was assessing these categories for both internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity; the former being concerned with the degree of internal consistency within each category; and the latter being concerned with differences between categories that are clear and meaningful (Patton 2002). Throughout this process it became clear that whilst discrete categories were discernable, there were also strong relationships between many of them. Another issue for balance was being faithful to the data whilst also drawing lessons for theory. On one hand the methods required the researcher to honour the depth of experience that people had conveyed in the interviews in describing fundamental influences on their sense of self and sense of place (Braud and Anderson 1998). Yet at the same time, to answer the research questions addressed in this thesis it was important to interpret the findings of the research in light of progress towards understanding the

influences on sense of place (Relph 1976; Cantrill and Senecah 2001). To help balance these two crucial issues, the findings reported in chapters four to six are presented first as a series of overlapping and inter-related themes that represent the empirical analysis. This is followed by a discussion of how these themes relate to questions posed by the thesis and the theoretical background to the research. Based upon this analysis, lessons for practice and conclusions for theory are presented in chapters seven and eight.

Chapter 4 Influences on sense of place

4.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter concerns the first of the main research questions addressed in this thesis, the influences on how people have developed a sense of place in Woodstock and in the Atherton Tablelands. The chapter presents a series of overlapping themes that were developed from the analysis. The most important themes involved the issues of growing up in the place of the interview, moving to place to escape from somewhere else, and moving to a place that is similar to somewhere else that one has known. Other important themes include a focus on seeking profit, and seeking to be productive.

4.2 Principal themes

4.2.1 Growing up in the place of the interview

Analysis indicated a distinction between people who had a strong childhood connection to the place of the interview and those who moved to the place of interview during adulthood. All of the participants who grew up in the place of the interview (16/40) emphasised how growing up there was a fundamental influence on their sense of place. For these participants the bond to their place was particularly strong – they had a strong sense of belonging, either to a particular community of people or to a property such as a family farm. Several of these participants emphasised that growing up in place was strongly connected to family history in the area.

Several of the participants who grew up in Woodstock emphasised the importance of being raised as part of a community and a location. Integrated with their memories was the strong presence of significant individuals, such as parents and grandparents who had a major influence on their sense of self and sense of place. For example, W2M grew up on the family farm and was strongly influenced by his grandfather who was one of the first European settlers in Woodstock. Growing up with the influence of a multi generational attachment to the land manifested a strong sense of pride in his place and a desire to look after it over the long term. W2M's core influences on place also included the theme of a strong sense of making the land produce (section 4.2.7).

Like W2M, participant W5M's sense of place was also very strongly influenced by growing up in his family's place and with his father and grandfather who had been among the first European settlers in the district. His father and grandfather were wood choppers and carpenters and they were directly involved in the construction of much of the infrastructure in the district, such as the railway and the school. They also cut and sorted much of the timber that gave the town of Woodstock its name. Accompanying his father and grandfather to work sites, W5M emphasised that his own wood cutting days began early in his childhood and that by the age of twelve he was sawing sleepers for the railways. Growing up on his family's property with the influence of these people, W5M has a strong sense of ownership of his land independent of the titles that were recorded after his family settled there. His sense of ownership is based on inheriting the property from his grandfather who claimed the land through his physical presence and hard work to settle the land according to European criteria. Now a great

grandfather himself, W5M is the head of a large family which is strongly part of the settlement history of this rural community.

W6M was also a direct descendent of one of the first European families to settle in the rural community of Woodstock. He also emphasised family history as the biggest influences on his sense of the place. His grandfather claimed possession of a large tract of land in the district in the late 19th Century and developed a large cattle farm, and W6M described his sense of place in terms of the large farm that it once was. Since the days of his grandfather, W6M's sense of the place has been influenced by the negotiations he has had with other members of the family regarding property rights and land uses. Now quite elderly, his own children have left the district altogether to have careers and families in urban areas. Though he has not travelled himself, the stories of his children have had some influence on his sense of place because they provide a point of comparison with the single place he has known all his life.

Another example of someone strongly influenced by growing up in his family's place under the influence of his grandfather and father was W7M. His father and grandfather grew vegetables and as a child he was struck by the physical intensity of the work that he saw going on around him. W7M was also influenced by growing up as a boy in a very large family where all the children worked on the farm. From his early days he was influenced by the need to produce food for the family and for the district and he continues to think of his place as one of hard physical work to produce food for himself and others.

Now in his 80s, A10M has travelled around the Tablelands throughout his life but hardly away from the district at all. He emphasised how growing up in the district was the largest influence on his sense of place, however, he didn't describe any particular people who were part of this influence. Regarding his family he only mentioned that they had come from elsewhere in Australia and that after being in the district for a few years (when A10M was a young boy) they had to move because the land they were on was resumed for the flooding of Lake Tinnaroo. By contrast, he emphasised being influenced by the character and concerns of the period. He grew up in a world of limited opportunities and emphasised the limited range of options as a key influence on his identity and his interaction with his place. He was born the son of bullock driver and he adopted the same profession as the only one available to him. In his own words, "We were scrub kids. We used to see the bullock teams snigging logs in the scrub. We didn't know no different". He was influenced by growing up in the middle of his society's predominant agenda of radically transforming the landscape. The world he knew was determined to clear native vegetation for farming land and for timber and this made a powerful impression on him. From early in life his sense of self and place became focussed on the perceived need to remove vegetation: "All the paddocks were full of bloody logs. We used to drag them out with bullock teams". All of these influences generated a strong sense of the district but not a sense of a particular property. The property that A10M now lives on was one he purchased as a young man to rest his bullocks. It wasn't until much later in his life that he built a house on it and moved there to live.

Participant A2M indicated that the biggest influence on his sense of place was being raised in the district but didn't describe any specific people he associated with this influence, rather he described being influenced by a sense of the social history of the area which in the past had been a bustling mining district but today was a quiet rural community. This influence led to a lifelong interest in investigating local stories and then moving to live on a historic mining property which had been abandoned many years before.

Several of the participants associated a strong sense of community with growing up in a place. For example, W2F was strongly influenced by growing in a context where people knew and looked after their neighbours and this has been a great influence on her sense of self and sense of place, which is focussed on a strong sense of community. It was important for her that in her community they all look out for one another, such as calling people if their cattle stray from the farm and help them get them home. She associated with this a context where her children could play outside, go fishing or swimming down at the creek without fearing the criminal activity she associated with cities. A more recent influence on her sense of place was the threat of an industrial project which would put this sense of community at risk.

A5M was greatly influenced by growing up in the small town of Dimbulah in the western Atherton Tablelands. He was influenced by a relaxed pace of life and a sense of freedom which he associated with his memories of swimming in the creeks and playing in the bush as a child. As a young adult he moved away from the Tablelands for work and found that living in urban areas has reinforced his preference for the

comfort of his small rural community. He has since returned to this community and because it give him a sense of freedom that he associates with his farm where he can be himself without being concerned about what neighbours think. His urban experiences also reinforced an impression that his rural community is a much safer place than cities to raise his children away from where he feels vulnerable to crime and traffic. He described his strong motivation to give his own children the sort of childhood experiences that he enjoyed whilst growing up in the district.

A young man of the Barbarrum people, A6M indicated that he has been very strongly influenced by growing up in his traditional country. He emphasised the significance of his grandfather sharing with him traditional knowledge about the country. He didn't want to go into detail about these influences but did mention being influenced by learning cultural knowledge from his grandfather about the plants in his traditional country.

A16M grew up on his family farm and has since taken over running the property from his father. He had a very strong attachment to his place which he had difficulty explaining in the interview. In his own words, A16M said "…this place is unique …I'd say this … [I'd] live here but [I] wouldn't live any where else… but it's going to be bloody hard to explain…". The message that came through from A16M was that the farm and his life were so closely linked that he had difficulty discussing them independently. In attempting to explain the influences on his sense of place A16M described inheriting the farm from his family along with a range of aspirations for place he had discussed with his father which included increasing the productivity of the farm

whilst revegetating some parts of the farm for the purposes of aesthetics, conservation and increasing production. It was clear from discussing these themes that he took great pride in the ecological health of his farm as well as its high productivity. He was influenced by a strong desire to develop what he called a 'sustainable farming system' on his property which focused on the long term productivity of his property. Building upon his own personal conservation plans, A16M's sense of place was also influenced by his involvement with conservation groups studying how his farm is integrated with broader ecological systems in the Atherton Tablelands.

A17F's family moved to the Tablelands when she was a young girl where she grew up in a small dairy farming community. She said she didn't realise how influential this had been on her until after she had moved away to work as a nurse in the army during WWII. Whilst away it became clear that her sense of self and sense of place were strongly tied to the supportive rural community that she grew up in.

> A17F… when I first went away and worked in the city… I worked in Sydney and Brisbane for four or five years and I couldn't believe how… like in the country there was always a pumpkin or a few potatoes or something like that … I could honestly say that I was influenced by the fact that people [in the city] had to buy every single thing they needed… my view of the Tableland [is] well this is pretty good you know people are helping us live and … even today there is a sense of sharing... well… in the city it's not there for them to give and … I think well that's good these people on the Tableland are thoughtful and they're generous and I think there may be still more sense of neighbourliness and community and caring.

It was following this experience that her desire to move back to the supportive community of her childhood became clear to her. Following her experience of living in the city she had a strong desire to return to the Tablelands and where she felt more at home.

> A17F…after the war I was anxious to come back to the Tablelands and I had been in the army for nearly four years [and] was probably feeling a bit nostalgic to get back to the places I was familiar with and in the mean time I had met [my husband] but we had gone to school together briefly here many years before and … we were married in 1945 and I was very keen to come back to the land… more so than [my husband] but I think it must have been a kind of a nostalgia for what I had known when I was young.

Though her urban experience in young life was also a crucial influence on her sense of place, it was not a rejection of urban life as such that prompted her to return to the Atherton Tablelands. Rather it was a point of comparison that helped her realise the importance of growing up in the Atherton Tablelands, where she wanted to go home to. Her emphasis on 'coming back to the land' provides an interesting contrast to many other people interviewed in this research. Whilst for many people interviewed for this research 'being on the land' was highly focussed on agricultural production, for A17F it was much more associated with living in a supportive community. The food produced on the farm was a strong symbol of the generous nature of the community because people would share it with their neighbours.

A17M was born in the Tablelands and was very strongly influenced by spending his childhood there. Like participant A10M he described being influenced by the lack of opportunities for young people in rural areas. As a young man he disliked living on a small dairy farm and he was content to leave the district when he joined the army as a soldier in World War Two. Before the war was over, the army released him from duty with instructions to return to dairy farming as part of an arrangement to supply milk for the army. As such he described a complex set of influences on his sense of place: the negative influence of growing up in a small rural community, the opportunity to leave and live a different life with the army, and the circumstances that brought him back to the same community he grew up in.

A20M was born in the Tablelands and grew up in a small farming district surrounded by dense forest. Growing up in the Atherton Tablelands he was very strongly influenced by the pre-dominant ethic of the period – turning 'rubbish' scrub country into productive land and timber for the mill. Also whilst growing up he was affected by the specific influence of his father who was the person who taught him the philosophy and techniques of clear felling timber that characterised their community. This will be further discussed in section 6.2.2. The group of childhood influences on his sense of place were also strongly linked to a desire to make the land produce.

After migrating from Italy, A21F's sense of place was strongly influenced by growing up as a migrant child on a small farm in the Mareeba district from the age of 9 years. She described the influence of her interactions with anglo-Australian children who were ignorant about her and insulted the country she came from. She developed a very strong attachment to the family farm where she has continued to live for the last 40 years. Her sense of the property is very strongly associated with the struggles that she saw her family go through as a young girl in Australia. In this way, her sense of place is fundamentally linked to her sense of family. Starting in her childhood and continuing into adult life, the place represented her family building a new life for themselves. She demonstrated this important link between self, family and place by telling how after finishing high school she was keen to study at university but didn't go because she didn't want to leave the family and the farm.

Now an old man A22M grew up in a period when the western Tablelands were undergoing intense change associated with European settlement and the rise of mining

industries. As a young boy he was struck by the chaos of people living in tents as they worked in the mines and building railroads. The rapid changes in infrastructure made a strong impression on him. He was also struck by the many people struggling to grow crops on small farms with only basic equipment and very little water. He was influenced by the community's sense of isolation from other settlements and living with little support in terms of income or food. He witnessed people having to abandon their farms to prevent themselves from starving. He conveyed a sense of growing up in a complicated time of hardship and opportunity, and a time of seeing change unravel rapidly before him. He didn't talk much about his family during this period, but said they cooked and served food for miners. When he was older he was influenced by travelling around the outback looking for gold and later droving cattle between remote cattle stations.

A23M is a tribal elder of the Ngadjonji people who belong to Ngadjon country, located around the upper Russell River. He also has a very strong attachment to the town of Malanda and the surrounding rainforest which is where his people moved following the Second World War and where he spent most of his childhood. He described the strongest influence on his sense of place to be growing up with the old people in the rainforests around Malanda. The influences on self and place were very closely linked: For A23M place is fundamental to identity and vice versa. In addition to growing up in the rainforest with the elders, A23M emphasised the influence of a particular individual. His sense of self and sense of Malanda was particularly influenced by growing up with his grandmother who instilled in him a strong sense of taking pride in himself and living in a way that generated respect amongst both the Indigenous and non-indigenous people

of his community. As a result of the influence of his grandmother he considers Malanda to be a place where people respect him for what he is – a decent human being rather than a man of a particular ethnic background.

4.2.2 Influence of a rural childhood elsewhere

A second major theme of the study, related to the first is that 8 of the 24 people who moved to the case study locations as adults emphasised that they were influenced by growing up in a rural environment elsewhere. Some of these had lived in rural environments for much of their lives, whilst others were attempting to re-connect with a rural childhood before living in urban environments. The issue which connected them with the place where they grew up varies between the participants. Many of them were influenced by childhood memories of a friendly and supportive social environment where people knew and respected each other. Others were influenced by a childhood where they associated rural life with a sense of independence and self reliance that they missed since living in urban environments. Another was influenced by a sense of protecting bush from the urban expansion he witnessed as a child.

Participant A1F emphasised the influence of having lived in a rural context in South Australia when she was as a child. She said she was strongly influenced by growing up in a friendly community where life seemed less complicated and people were more respectful towards each other. This memory stayed with her when she moved to urban environments where she felt unfulfilled. The biggest influence on her sense of place in the Atherton Tablelands was social – she wanted to feel part of a community where

people know each other and look after one another. Recalling her rural childhood, she wanted to live in such a way that she could see the interactions between human and natural systems more clearly. For example, she wanted to see the animals which provide human food and the streams which provide water for drinking.

Participant A8F described some specific circumstances as being the core influence on her sense of place. However, she explained that underlying much of the significance of these circumstances was having grown up in a rural environment somewhere else. Now a young mother, she was strongly influenced by a desire to recreate this environment for her own children. In particular, she recalled a sense of freedom associated with riding her bicycle around country roads and she wanted her children to be able to enjoy the same experience.

A9M spent part of his childhood growing up on a 'bush property' near Brisbane and he associated this with a lifelong affinity with what he calls the 'wildness' of the bush. Participant A9M explained that one of the biggest influences on his sense of place was witnessing the extensive clearing of native vegetation around him during childhood for the purposes of residential development. As a young adult he moved away to study but continued to live and work in country that reminded him of the place where he grew up (including doing some ecological studies in the drier parts of the Atherton Tablelands). The imprint of seeing his childhood environment place radically transformed was echoed in a later period of his life. He continued to see similar country cleared for residential purposes and industrial land, except where it was protected as national parks. Seeing this change as a child and young adult was a powerful force in generating a

sense of place focussed on ecological protection and rehabilitation of a particular type of environment, and when he came across a portion of similar country for sale near Walsh River in the western part of the Tablelands he was keen to acquire it and care for it.

> A9M: …I'd always wanted live in this exact kind of country too but I never imagined there was any that was sort of outside of state forest ...where I did all my thesis work there's [the] same lemon scented gums, big granite boulder sort of country and, I just, I don't know why, perhaps it reminds me a little bit of Glasshouse Mountains where I grew up. But I've always been really taken by it and I just never imagined in my wildest dreams that, it was like it was a real fantasy that I would be able to live in this sort of country one day so when I first saw it, when we first came out that time it was like a dream come true. I just fell in love with it… I mean … growing up in a rural area, seeing at home as a kid and also just around Townsville just seeing bush getting cleared, you know it's really, it really deeply affects me, and I always swore that when I owned my place that I'd never do that sort of thing.

A12M and A12F came to the Atherton Tablelands just a few years prior to the interview but the move was symbolic of a move they had been wanting to make all their lives. They were both very mobile people, moving throughout their childhoods and adult lives, yet they both had strong childhood connections to rural environments which stayed with them for many years moving from job to job and city to city. A12M's family were from a farming background in New South Wales. He himself never lived on the family farm but he often visited the farm to see his grandparents as a young child and grew deeply attached to the farm. These visits made a strong impression on him and throughout his whole life he had a strong desire to 'get back to the land'. A12F had grown up on farms as part of her early childhood before her family started to move around for work. When she finished school she wanted to study agriculture but it was not possible for a woman to follow this path when she finished school so she went into nursing. Both A12M and A12F associate rural life with being independent. The nature of this independence varied slightly between them. A12F emphasised the importance of

choosing when she wanted to work, and saw agriculture as freeing her from the rhythm of working nine to five. A12M emphasised the importance of choosing where he wanted to work, emphasising that agriculture symbolised independence from an office environment. A12F also liked the idea of living in a rural community where friends drop by for a cup of tea and a chat. These themes were demonstrated when the participants explained how they came to be in their place:

> A12F: Well clearly it was lifestyle.
>
> A12M: Yeah like it.
>
> I: Lifestyle?
>
> A12M: That's why we moved here really.
>
> A12F: Lifestyle and being our own boss and being able to have flexibility in the working day. You know like some days we get up early and work other days we don't and you know it's on a day to day basis. It's not so much like a regulated job you know nine to five Monday to Friday sort of work. I mean you know like in our peak times we work twelve hour days.
>
> A12M: At least.
>
> A12F: But something might pop up at home in the morning and whatever you know…
>
> I: Yes.
>
> A12F: It's no big deal so long get to work that day, so long as we get to work that day…
>
> A12M If you probably compared it to working for somebody ... we do work much longer hours. The thing about it is that they're our hours. We decide.
>
> I: Yes.
>
> A12M: And I suppose that's quite important but our decision to live on the Tablelands is one, because we really like this part of the world, we wanted to do something different. We wanted to have a job that was agriculture based I suppose.
>
> I: Agriculture based?
>
> A12M: Yeah you know we wanted to do something on the land and then the amount of money we had of course then dictated what we could do.

Throughout their lives they wanted to 'get back to the land', however, after starting a family their desire to abandon their urban public sector jobs became stronger. They were attracted particularly to the perceived independence and freedom of sheep farming in New South Wales and when their children were young they came close to realising this dream. Despite their strong desires and coming very close to achieving their goal,

they didn't go through with their plan because of concerns about money and the lack of education and health services for their children in the bush. Representing an interesting contrast to other participants, A12M and A12F thought it would be better for their children to stay in the city and they postponed their move to the country until after their children had left home. It was only after their children left home that they finally abandoned the city to live on a small farm in the Atherton Tablelands. They expressed this as achieving their lifelong goal of claiming independence over their own lives.

Participant A15F described influences which fall into several themes in this work, but underlying all of them was her rural childhood in Wales. Suffering from a physical disability, A15F'S sense of the Atherton Tablelands concerns a place where she is happy to sit on her veranda and admire the view of the hills, the farm animals and wildlife. She rationalised this strong desire to look out over a rural landscape by explaining how as a child she loved to look out of her window at paddocks and go for long walks in rural Wales.

> A15F… I mean I've always liked open fields and hills. As child I always went for long solitary walks and I've done that all my life, me and the dog, because my parents… well we lived in a rural sort of area, out right on the very very edge of the town. From my bedroom window I just saw paddocks …

Her childhood experiences of looking out over rural landscapes and rambling through the fields made a strong impression on her. Participant A15F is further discussed under the theme of circumstance and specific events in section 4.2.8.

A18M's sense of the Tablelands was influenced by his long term connection to country towns. His sense of self is strongly associated with growing up amongst 'country

people' in a rural community in the United States and this influenced his desire to work as a priest in a small rural town in the Atherton Tablelands.

> I: OK and in that case is there a particular reason why you chose the Tablelands?
>
> A18M: … I really like the Tablelands … [my wife] and I both grew up in a town in the States but it wasn't a real large town and our grand parents, our parents and grand parents were country people, lived out in the country and we like country areas. The first Church I Pastored in the States was in a country area. The first Church I Pastored here in Australia was in a country area and we always liked the climate on the Tableland, bit wet some times but rain and cool and country people, the sort of place we thought we'd like to live… I suppose it's just a people thing you know and I really like it that way. That's the way I remember things were when I was a little kid we used to go see people at night you didn't watch telly, I don't think we had one and you'd just sit and talk.

Whilst the main thread of A18M's sense of place concerned rural community, his sense of place included the influence of rural scenery. In further exploring his attachment to country towns, he indicated that domesticated animals, pastures and flowing water were all part of his rural sense of place.

> I: OK and is there something about the country, country area, what's it to do with? Peace and quiet or what?
>
> A18M: Yeah I like that a lot. I like the cows, I like the green hills, like the trees, like the waterfalls and the creeks you know [I] like the rain…

A18M didn't work with the cows or in the fields himself. Rather these elements were symbolic of an agricultural landscape which fitted with his sense of a rural community.

A4M has lived in rural places all his life. Underlying the influences on his sense of place was growing up on a dairy farm in Germany. He provides an interesting contrast to participants who attempted to reconnect with a rural childhood elsewhere. There was nothing romantic about this childhood memories, he recalled farming involving hard work, poor conditions and low pay and these memories have influenced him his whole life. These memories underpinned his move to Australia to find a smarter way of making money from living on the land. Settling first in a rural part of southern

Queensland, he found he could make more money from repairing and trading farms than working them. Influenced first by his negative experience of the family farm in Germany and his subsequent economic success in southern Queensland, his sense of the Atherton Tablelands is centred on living on the land whilst having a high quality of life. In addition to this, his sense of place has been influenced by exchanging experiences with other farmers from all over the world and reading overseas industry journals which inform about what changes to the Australian farming environments he can expect to see in the future.

4.2.3 Rejection of urban life

Several of the people who described being strong influenced by their childhood connection to another rural environment also described the influence of rejecting life in the city. For example, it has already been shown in section 4.2.2 that rejecting their urban life was implicit in the discussion of the influences on sense of place for A12F and A12M. For these participants, the city was a place where they had to work in a job they didn't like with conditions that didn't suit them. Participants A1F and A18M also drew comparisons between their rural childhoods and their urban adult lives, hence for these participants there was a strong connection with growing up in a rural environment (see section 4.2.2). Participants such as A7M and A2F had been born and raised in the city yet for their own reasons they rejected their urban lives in favour of something else. This rejection of urban life was described as a major influence on their sense of place in their adopted rural environment. As with people who were trying to reconnect with a rural childhood, a prominent theme amongst these participants was a strong desire to

live in a particular type of community – one which is small and friendly and supportive, a community where people feel like they know their neighbours, and where they have a sense of belonging. Other issues included a sense of a cleaner environment to the city, and also access to opportunities for recreation.

When participant 18M described a preference for living in a rural community on the Tablelands, he made use of a contrast with the town of Cairns. He initially went to Cairns in the late 1970s when it was a quiet and friendly town of 35,000 people. Over the following decade he watched it increase in population to almost 100,000 and he found this deeply disturbing. Over this time the character of the town changed from being a conservative but friendly place to being full of tourists, hotels, casinos and infrastructure which all made him 'dizzy'. Over this time he found himself increasingly escaping Cairns for visits to the nearby Atherton Tablelands which was a place of refuge and retreat. When it came to moving to the Tablelands permanently, this was partly a move towards the sort of lifestyle he new as a child, but on the other hand it was also a move away the emerging city of Cairns.

After growing up in a rural town, participant A1F lived for many years in a capital city where she felt unfulfilled. Whilst some participants described problems with traffic, stress or urban crime, for A1F it was the people who caused her to move away. She found urban people to be harsh and selfish. She saw the worst of this in her place of employment, where people did not seem to have any motivation to help others, the were exclusively focussed on progressing their own careers.

A2F was raised in an urban context and was relatively new to the Tablelands. She was strongly influenced by her desire to connect with the mythology of the bush which she sees as part of her own identity and part of an Australian national psyche. She was also influenced by a desire to take control of her life which she didn't feel she had in the city. She did this by developing a business venture in conjunction with A2M focussing on heritage tourism and bush experience. After she had arrived in the Atherton Tablelands one of the biggest impressions on her was that people came to know her as an individual and call her by her name. This appealed to her after living in an urban context where people seemed not to trust each other and seemed to be troubled with their own identities.

A7M was strongly influenced by a rejection of his former urban lifestyle. He found life in Brisbane unfulfilling and when his work sent him to live temporarily in a small coastal town in New South Wales he decided he wanted to leave the city and move to a small town permanently. He emphasised the appeal of small towns as an environment where it is easier to meet people and become part of a community. In addition, whilst he lived in the city he always wanted to go and live near forests and mountains where he could get out and experience nature. In contrast to stress, pollution and feeling socially isolated in the city, he was seeking fresh air, space and a friendly community somewhere in rural Australia. The Atherton Tablelands was chosen for work reasons. Since arriving there, he had been influenced by having difficulty making friends in the beginning. After he started to meet people, he found the lack of anonymity of his rural context frustrating – in his own words, 'everyone knows your business'.

In discussing the theme of circumstance it will be explained that one of the core influences on A9F1's sense of place was related to her partner, A9M and her children. In addition to this, she was also strongly influenced by her recent period of living in the urban area of Townsville. Considering herself as an environmental activist, she was strongly influenced by her rejection of urban places on ecological grounds as places of pollution, and because the environmental impacts of urban dwellers are made invisible through sewerage systems and rubbish removal. She strongly rejected the idea of raising her children in an urban environment.

> A9F1… we didn't plan to have [another child] but we came here to bring, take our children out of the city. Clean air, clean water and to try and be a little bit more self sufficient and I mean, in the city I've been quite an active environmentalist. I've sort of finally decided I'm going to start practicing what I preach for a change you know I'm sick of flushing the toilet and doing what so much of what you can't avoid in the city. [I thought] I'd really like to just go out and start living it for a while especially now that I've got a child...

Her sense of place is very strongly tied to her children and this is further discussed in section 4.2.8.

4.2.4 Profit

Some participants were influenced above all by a desire to improve their economic circumstances and the location where they ended up was selected primarily according to economic criteria – simply where they could make the most money. The theme of coming to the area to make money has been partly raised in discussing the influences of participant A4M who was motivated to find more profitable ways of living on the land than the hard work and poor conditions he associated with the farm he grew up on.

Other participants who described making money amongst their major influences on place were A21M and W3M and W3F. These participants indicated that making money was a major influence on their relationship with place, but that this was related to other considerations. For example A21M emphasised the theme of overcoming adversity as the core influence on his sense of place, as discussed in section 4.2.5. For W3M and W3F making money was the primary reason for being in their place, yet it was making money from a particular activity, and this is further discussed under the theme of production focus in section 4.2.7. Like W3M and W3F, participant A3F came to the Atherton Tablelands to make money from a particular activity and this dictated her sense of it. For this participant, place was not about a sense of community or a clean environment, it was about making money from dairy farming. She emphasised that profit was her primary motive in finding a place to live and work the land, and a dairy farm in the Tablelands seemed like the most attractive option. In the interview she was asked if there were any other considerations that affected her decision.

> I: Are there any other considerations for moving to the Tablelands ? I mean I don't know, something, the kids or any other considerations?
>
> A3F: No. My husband's a farmer. The cane farm that he was in was a family arrangement that had finished and we had to do something. He tried something else, builder's labourer and that type of thing but he just was a farmer so we were coming to the Tablelands because … cane farms at the time were too expensive to buy and we had to come and find something. So that's why we came, dairy. It was like I said [a better] return on your investment…

She thought of the farm as a business more than anything else. It is nonetheless worth pointing out that her sense of self is still associated with being a farmer and being married to a farmer, but the primary reason she identified was financial.

4.2.5 Overcoming adversity

Some participants were influenced by a strong desire to improve their lives by overcoming adversity. These participants were people who had experienced hardship in other places and their sense of place was an extension of their actions to overcome their difficulties.

W4F's sense of place was influenced by two principal considerations. One of these involved overcoming trauma in her life at another location. This influence was focussed on the property as being a place of creating place as a fresh start – a place of getting over previous problems and starting again.

> I: Can you tell me what brought you here?
>
> W4F: A major disaster. I left the other area I was in. I didn't have to, I chose to leave. I lost a husband and a son a few years apart it was still enough. I didn't want to live there any more and I wanted to start a new life. The reason I came here, I actually looked all over Queensland [for] where I was going to move to, but this town, Townsville, was quite obviously the one place where they needed a thoroughbred stud and a horse vet…

By explaining that she could have stayed in her previous area but preferred to move away, she indicated that her sense of place was focussed on overcoming her previous difficulties by making a fresh start. The other main theme she described was focus on her version of rural production, and that was breeding race horses. This is further discussed under the theme of production focus in section 4.2.7.

A21M's sense of place was partly influenced from growing up on a small self sufficient farm in Italy, however, the biggest influence on A21M's sense of place was the move he made from Italy as young man in the 1950s to escape a war ravaged country without prospects for him and his young family. This move was the expression of a man

seeking opportunities and independence to build his life. In his own terms he wanted to 'make his future'. With a little assistance from a friend he struggled to find a way to come to Australia and came directly to the Mareeba district because it was where his friend was living, the only person he knew outside of Italy. He initially came with the intention to earn money and then return home. In this period his sense of the district was strongly influenced by these early years of hard manual labour required to farm tobacco in dry soil without machinery. Later, with his wife and child joining him in Australia he purchased land of his own and invested heavily in his farm and experiencing financial success from his efforts. These influences on his sense of place took on greater significance when he returned to Italy 10 years after arriving and realised that he preferred to live in Australia where there was less corruption and the individual is rewarded for hard work.

Overcoming adversity was also an influence on participant A21F, daughter of A21M, who migrated as a young child with her mother to join her father in Australia. Being in such a close knit family, she was well familiar with the adversity her parents suffered before leaving for Australia, and the difficult conditions they received on arrival. She also had adversity of her own to deal with, in the form of difficult relations with the anglo-Australian children she met at school. With her parents she has fought to overcome these difficulties. Their efforts to conquer their problems have been highly associated with the success of their farm, which has served as a tangible expression of their efforts.

A19F's sense of place was strongly influenced by experiencing six years of financial hardship whilst leasing a dairy farm in Southern Queensland. She indicated that at the root of her problems was insufficient access to water.

> A19F: We were in the dry area and we were leasing and it was six years we were leasing there and five years we were in drought… we had a little boy that was three years old he'd never seen any rain.
>
> I: Wow.
>
> A19F: Yeah, never seen rain. We were trying to dairy …but there was no water so we gave up trying to keep water up to the pigs and so the pigs went, failed. We sold heifers and well we, just to keep ourselves afloat because we thought oh well next year will be pretty good and we'll be able to make some money. The only reason why you go dairying is to make money, and so both of you can work together, I mean it's the only reason anyone goes and does something is to make some money isn't it. Then we had to sell cows and eventually we had to call it quits because it still didn't rain …

She emphasised how the years of hardship in southern Queensland were a primary reason for moving to the Atherton Tablelands which had a climate which was more suitable for dairy farming. Yet, despite the higher rainfall, A19F continued to have financial difficulties after she moved to the Atherton Tablelands. When the dairy industry was de-regulated she found she couldn't afford to continue leasing the farm. She was ended up bitterly disappointed when the compensation for her farm went to her landlord rather than herself.

4.2.6 Living in a similar environment overseas

Trained as a botanist, A13M travelled to the tropical highlands of Uganda as part of his work. The effect of living in this environment had a profound impact on him. He admired the ecology of this area as a rich abundance of tropical species. He also found the climate strongly appealing. By contrast, he found the social and political instability of the area less appealing. When he later abandoned his academic career, he was

attracted by the idea of returning to a tropical highland environment and conducting a small horticultural operation. He emphasised the importance of his time in Uganda as a major impact upon his sense of the place. He wanted to live in a similar environment but with better health care and a more stable political environment. After being amazed by the ecology of tropical highlands in Uganda, he found the tropical forests of the Atherton Tablelands similarly impressive. In his own words, he found them 'mind boggling'. He continues to experience his appreciation for this ecology by going for walks through the forests. In addition to the intellectual appreciation he has for these forests, these walks involve an experiential stimulation, something which he finds highly uplifting.

For A14M and A14F, their sense of place was shaped by several years of working in various tropical climates around the world. In particular, their sense of place was influenced by their recent experience of living on an elevated plateau in Cameroon. Essentially their biggest impression of the Atherton Tablelands was that it had most of the features they loved about Cameroon yet without the same problems they had experienced in that country. For these participants, the Atherton Tablelands and the Cameroon highlands both had a similar climate, spectacular forests, abundant wildlife and small towns away from crowds and traffic of big cities. However, they said that the Atherton Tablelands had the advantages of a relatively stable political environment, less disease and much better access to health care. In addition to the physical geography and the relative availability of the services A14M and A14F were also influenced by the sorts of land uses they were engaged in whilst in Cameroon, with a strong emphasis towards balancing conservation with low level production and eco-tourism. They

believed that their place in the Atherton Tablelands is perfectly suited to combining low level grazing with nature conservation, and is specially well suited for ecotourism.

> A14M… I like very very much the idea … we do think it has a very very big potential up here, not only for international tourism but as well I think that a town like Cairns will grow over the time and many many people will use the Tableland as a kind of recreational area for weekends …

Whilst on one hand their sense of place was influenced by living in a similar environment in Cameroon, it was also influenced to a certain extent by living in a very different environment in Europe. From their discussion of the past it was apparent that they had developed a strong desire to maintain a healthy ecosystem after being exposed to high input farming systems in Europe which they strongly rejected on health and ecological grounds. Underlying their sense of the Atherton Tablelands was that it was a place where they thought they could be ecologically responsible, including growing their own organic food whilst allowing the rainforest to prosper around them, and inviting visitors to the farm to share the experience.

Whilst the major influences on sense of place that A14M and A14F described were related to comparisons with overseas environments, since arriving they also described being influenced by the experience living on the property and working the land. For example, they described the surprise of finding wildlife attempting to enter their house. They had always been interested in watching wildlife but didn't realise that the wildlife was also watching them.

4.2.7 Production focus

A further core influence on place was a group of participants who were strongly influenced by a sense of self that was focussed on agricultural production. Some of these people described a specific form of agricultural production that dictated their sense of place, such as having 'cattle in the blood' or being mad about horses. Other participants indicated a more general influence of wanting the land to produce something for human consumption. This suite of influence overlapped considerably with the influence of growing up in place. This is not surprising given that the case studies were agricultural districts. Only in two cases did this influence overlap with people who had childhood attachments to rural areas followed by living in the urban environments for many years.

W1M came to the area to work at a research field station. He was strongly influenced by the nature of this research which was focussed on developing alternatives to native pastures in order to make beef farming more productive. W1M explained that this focus reflected significant broader historical trends of the period. He emphasised that from the 1960s to the 1980s there was a large public investment in making the pastoral industry more productive and profitable and this broader aim was underlying W1Ms sense of self and sense of place. Most of the research that he was involved with has finished and he has retired but he continues to define himself and his place as being about promoting beef productivity.

Seeking profit was a primary influence on sense of place for W3M, yet that this profit had to come from farming. Ever since he could remember, W3M had always wanted to work with cattle but for many years he worked in the city and helped out on his father's property and on neighbours properties at weekends. He and W3F have been attached to the place since W3M's father bought the property in the 1960s, however, up until the 1980s they continued to work in urban jobs most of the time and helped out on the farm on the weekends. The change occurred when W3M's became vision impaired and it was because of this physical disability that he had to cease his urban employment. Throughout the interview it became apparent that this disability was a further influence on W3M's sense of place and that the property is where he can fulfil his strong desire to be productive and prosper from his own hard work. A related influence on his sense of place is that he has seen neighbours inherit large productive cattle farms then slowly go broke by not working hard enough to be profitable. Seeing this has reinforced his determination to work hard on his own property. Being a profitable grazier is fundamental to his sense of self. In his own words he has cattle 'in his blood'.

As already introduced under the theme of overcoming adversity, W4F was strongly influenced by a suite of key factors which brought her first of all to leave a different part of Australia, move to the Townsville district, and settle on a particular property. The other major influence on her sense of place was suitability for horses. Her sense of self and sense of place were intrinsically horse focussed. She defines herself through her work and her work is with horses. After a wide search around the state she targeted Townsville as the best district for her work. As such she selected her place as being the one that most fitted with her pre-existing requirements – the need for a vet and being far

away from her previous life and having soil and water that are suitable for raising horses. These were the major influences on her sense of place that were developed before she moved there. Since then she had been influenced by the support of the community and particularly the local school. She was also influenced by the impressive wildlife she had found on her property, such as two distinct populations of kangaroos.

A19F came to the Atherton Tablelands to lease a dairy farm. She was influenced by her traumatic experience in another district (discussed under the theme of overcoming adversity in section 4.2.5). However, underlying this was a much stronger influence related to her sense of self as a farmer. This sense of self was focussed on production and was the largest influence on her sense of place. Ultimately she was forced to leave the farm due to dairy de-regulation. Even though she left the dairy industry she still had a sense of self associated with agricultural production and this influenced how she viewed the land. She found it very difficult to go looking for a new home which was not a farm.

> A19F: Yeah because you know when I went, when we went looking for a place to buy I was still looking at farms, or farm type things. Even if it was a small farm I was still looking at farms so I was still viewing as a farmer wasn't I?
>
> I: Will you always have that?
>
> A19F: Yeah I think so, and like my husband says [you'll] never get me living in a town, and I think well, I've lived on a farm all my life, but yeah if I had to live in town I'd live in town. But I'd probably always lean towards the farmers always and I'll probably always call myself a farmer. Now I've had to call myself a blockie this year aren't I [chuckle] but yeah, always I think. It doesn't matter what I do. If I become a cleaning lady I don't think I'll ever change…

A19F emphasised that she will 'always call herself a farmer' no matter where she lives. She indicated that this sense of self dictated how she saw her place in the Atherton

Tablelands as being focussed on dairy production, despite the difficulties she had living out this sense of place which will be further discussed in section 5.2.2.

As already discussed in section 4.2.1, A20M was influenced by growing up in a small rural community where people were focussed on clearing vegetation to make the land productive. Speaking of his earlier days before the declaration of World Heritage, A20M described the joy he got from making the land produce.

> A20M… I loved land clearing. Loved land clearing.
>
> I: Land clearing?
>
> A20M: Yeah I loved that.
>
> I: What did you like about it?
>
> A20M: The smell of it and to see rubbish…you could look back in twelve months and say well I brought that from a pile of junk to running probably 20 or 30 head of cattle you know and I like that sort of thing.
>
> I: Yeah?
>
> A20M: I just love ploughing paddocks… I really liked the smell, the smell of the day, of the fresh dirt getting turned over and you know sort of making something. Making something that was unproductive into something that you could make something out of…

Interestingly, A20M did no farming of his own. For all of his clearing days he worked as a contractor, assisting others make their land suitable for cattle grazing or crop growing. Despite this contract arrangement, it was much more than money which encouraged him to chop the trees and plough the fields. It was an emotional issue, a source of satisfaction that he was helping to make the land produce food.

Some participants included an element of production focus but had found it important to balance production with other aspects of his place. For example, since he was a young man W2M had been strongly motivated to increase the productive capacity of the family cattle farm, taking advantage of agricultural research and extension in the 1970s.

However, later in life he was strongly influenced by a desire to better understand the ecology of his place, including the native birds and mammals around the farm and the trees which have grown back in paddocks he previously cleared as a young man. For participant A8F, it was important that her land should produce, but she was satisfied that her five acres contributed towards the household supply of fruit and vegetables. Moreover, her place was much more focussed on creating an environment suitable for her children to play and where friends could visit and enjoy themselves.

4.2.8 Circumstance and specific events

A final group of influences on sense of place concerns circumstance or events outside of the immediate control of the participants. For some participants, their sense of place was largely influenced by their lack of opportunities to do anything else. As one participant explained his reason for becoming a bullock driver, "we were scrub kids… we didn't know no different". A further example of circumstance being a major influence on sense of place is the effect of specific events on some participants. For some participants, becoming pregnant made the difference between a place they were visiting and a place where they built their future. A different type of circumstance which played a significant role in influencing people's sense of place was coming to join family. Sense of place for some participants was principally influenced by a relationship to someone else – it is the place where they came to be with a partner or relative, and this is their fundamental reason for being there.

4.2.8.1 Family and friends

W3F indicated that she worked in Townsville several days a week and if it wasn't for her husband's medical condition she might have preferred to live in town. As such, for W3F her sense of the property at Woodstock is strongly associated with supporting her disabled husband and being part of the farm. Much of this has been hard physical work for the two of them, such as several years working together spraying rubbervine and chinee apple.

A11F2 came to the area as a stopover as part of her travels but ended up staying. She described two interlinked influences on her sense of place. The most prominent of these was developing strong attachments to the family members she initially came to visit. Fiercely independent and career focussed, strong links with family had not been a major part of her previous urban lifestyle. It was only after getting to know her hosts and sharing their relaxed way of life that she started to develop a strong attachment to the Atherton Tablelands as a place where she felt at home with family and a relaxed pace of life. She found her sense of self affected by this change in circumstances and she became influenced by thinking about outback mythology. In particular she was attracted to a sense of rural freedom and adventure that she experienced whilst riding her horse in the bush.

In addition to A13M's experience of Uganda, a further influence on his sense of place was the tragedy of his wife dying. The impact of this was sufficient to encouraging him to sell the farm and leave the Tablelands. It was only after he did this that he realised how much he missed the community dimension of his place in the Atherton Tablelands.

This combination of events – his wife dying and then leaving the district had the effect of making him realise how strongly he was attached to the Atherton Tablelands.

> A13M: The initial attraction to the area was the biophysical environment really you know it's only consequently that I've developed a kind of social network which, as I discovered when I went away for a while has become very valuable to me, and was certainly one of the main things that brought me back here permanently.

After leaving he missed this sense of community so much that he returned to the Tablelands to live in one of the towns.

A11F1 was visiting the Tablelands to stay on her father's farm and at the same time investigate some Indigenous issues in relation to her work. In so doing she developed friendships with members of Ngadjonji people who strongly influenced her sense of the country where she was living. She started to become integrated into an Indigenous culture that interacted with country in a way entirely new to her and one that she had difficulty explaining with words. While she was learning about this new way of looking at the land, a particular experience made a powerful impression upon her. This experience involved a dingo that interacted with her in a particular way, and she associated the experience with a friend of hers who had died in custody that night.

> A11F1: …[One of the main experiences that]… influenced my view of the Tablelands is that dingo experience … that really tainted it, and that whole hanging out with all the Murris when I first moved up here, that gave me a completely different perspective …it was just [a] completely different view.
>
> I: Can you describe what it is?
>
> A11F1: …it's not about the professions it's about the emotions in the ownership, which you also get with non-Aboriginal people but, I don't know if I can explain it very well but it just, it really affected me. It was like, I'm so lost for words, it's not that they own the land at all… I say it's trite to say that they belong to the land but…
>
> I: Say whatever you think.
>
> A11F1: It's not just the land and what can be made from that land and the investment that they put into the land it's like what … well what the land gives them and how it supports them and how it helps them and how they're emotionally and spiritually and intrinsically

> tied to the land, completely different perspective of the environment you know it's not oh what can we reap from this, what can we do to get something out of this…

For A11F1 this experience could not be rationalised outside of the Indigenous culture she was learning about.

For A15F, living close to family has also been very important since she has become disabled. In this regard, her sense of the Atherton Tablelands was also greatly influenced by a period living on a small farm in New Zealand where several family members lived near each other on the same small farm.

> A15F: In New Zealand we lived on a farm type place. We weren't farming… but I mean the nearest house was probably about quarter of an hour's walk …[our neighbours] all lived quite separately I mean discretely. I don't think they could even see each other's houses, and I just found it absolutely fantastic. I just love that concept, so I suppose in a sense that's what I've tried to do here…

Though farming was not part of her identity, living on a farm was, and this is why the Atherton Tablelands was so well suited to A15F. She could look out at the view and also know that her family were near.

4.2.8.2 Falling pregnant

A8F's sense of place was influenced by a broad range of factors both before moving to the Atherton Tablelands and after she had arrived. She came to the area for temporary work and as such her attachment to the place was a case of progressively moving from itinerant status to settling there. She was confident that the single biggest influence on her sense of the place was falling pregnant whilst working there. This in turn triggered other processes which she didn't become fully conscious of until after they had occurred. After falling pregnant she realised that her own rural childhood (elsewhere in

Australia) was a big influence upon her and her sense of place became focussed on creating a healthy environment for her children modelled on her own childhood.

> A8F: …raising kids is it what it comes down to it's just really good. They can go to good small rural schools, they can swim wherever they like, they can jump on bicycles, they can go anywhere. I guess it reminds me of my childhood which would have been 30 years ago. I maybe even that's what I'm trying to do, give them the childhood I had.

Falling pregnant became strongly associated with a desire to settle after many years of moving from place to place. The process of settling further triggered a memory of travelling through the Tablelands as a young adult and remembering how impressed she was with this place which in her mind was at the interface between social and natural systems. When she ended up settling in the area it was this interface that attracted her most and she became strongly attached to an ex-dairy farm on the edge of World Heritage forest:

> A8F: …when I bought the land I didn't think about this, but it must have been in my sub-conscious. When I took a group of friends up there … just after I bought the land, and we were sitting in the back hill I had this memory from when I'd been there before when I was nineteen and my boyfriend and I were travelling sort of round through north Queensland and it really hit me because you drive out of farming land straight into World Heritage forest like you go from bare open paddocks straight into long long long standing fully unchartered, just rainforest and I remember that at that point in time thinking of it as a gateway, like a real gateway feeling and my property is just across the road from that. So I think I had in my mind a very clear image right from the start but it was still in my sub conscious…

Her impressions of her earlier travel and her interest in the ecology of the area were definitely influences on her sense of the place but the trigger for these was falling pregnant and deciding to settle. Another influence that was triggered by this major change in personal circumstances took the form of seeing herself as part of broader demographic trend. After she had arrived in her place she realised that her own story was characteristic of young adults who wanted to move to rural areas for the same reasons that motivated her to stay:

> A8F: …I guess then I started to notice younger people perhaps like me coming into the area and living there. People wanted that lifestyle, living with fresh air, places to swim, raising their kids and I met tons of young families who moved to the Tablelands for that lifestyle….

Participant A9F1 grew up in a rainforest setting and although she emphasised how this has strongly defined her sense of self, other factors have been prominent in influencing her sense of the place where she had chosen to live with her partner and raise her children. In the past she decided where she and her partner would live and she wanted him to decide this time, her only criteria being that she wanted to raise her child in a healthy bush setting rather than the environmental devastation she associated with they city. Her love of rainforest triggered an initial rejection of this dry place, but that she adapted to the country relatively quickly.

> A9F1: [in the beginning]…all I could think of [was] …where's the water because I'm someone who's grown up in rainforest and worked in rainforest. I have a real attraction for rainforest and I never imagined, never fantasized about living in this sort of country totally far removed from what I would imagine and it's had that affect on me as well. In time I've actually grown to love it and when I go away for a little while I come back and I just have this really strong feeling in my heart when I see it like coming down the range it's like, oh it's like coming home, beautiful…

Since arriving at their property in the Walsh River community she has been very strongly influenced by giving birth to another child there and raising her new born child in initially difficult circumstances.

> A9F1: I had the baby here, I got pregnant when I first got here so it's been a very intense journey for me because I've found it quite hard physically and a lot of times on my own here with the kids and thinking you know I didn't choose to be here, what am I doing here. But I love it and I feel the testing part of it has really made me strong and made me look deeper at things as well. It's been a real spiritual journey for me.

Expanding upon the influence of raising children in the place, A9F1 emphasised the importance of spending extended periods of time on the property with her baby looking at the view and reflecting upon her sense of self and her sense of place:

> A9F1: … I think too [it's] something about being able to look into the distance I know I've spent so many times here just sitting feeding the baby, staring off into the distance, and the place seems to grow on you in that. Like you just have a lot of time for reflection and seeing it…

For participant A11F1, an important influence on her sense of place was falling pregnant to her Indigenous boyfriend, and subsequently raising her young child on the property. She found the pregnancy to be a difficult experience in a rural environment isolated from her own network of friends and support. The pregnancy served to increase her integration with the Indigenous community of the father although this experience also left her feeling isolated when the support she had hoped for wasn't available. As individuals in the Indigenous community moved away she lost contact with this community and since then her sense of place was influenced by members of her family moving to the area. Since these people have moved to the area she has made the transition from being a visitor on the farm to permanently living there.

4.2.8.3 War

The impact of circumstance on W17M has already been raised earlier in this chapter. The way he described this impact was that he was affected by events outside of his immediate control that pressured him back to the place of his childhood.

> A17M: … during the army days I swore I'd swore I'd never go back to dairy farming. I thought there was a far better way of life and I had been trained in a bit of electronic work and wireless work and so forth and I thought I'd follow that up. But anyway, circumstances, what we say, dictated that I'd go back dairy farming and we together, together I say we always worked together, and we did a pretty fair job at dairy farming. But I suppose I was never as happy at dairy as I might have been.

The duty of supplying milk for the army was a clear example of the 'circumstances' that influenced A17M's sense of the Tablelands, a requirement placed on him that was

outside of his control. It was also implicit in the interview that A17M was committed to being with A17F and she was very keen to go back to the land and the supportive community that she had missed during her own war experience.

4.2.8.4 World Heritage

Though the most marked influence on his sense of place occurred during his childhood, as an adult A20M's sense of the Atherton Tablelands was affected by the declaration of World Heritage over much of the forest areas he worked in. For several years A20M was frustrated that he couldn't clear the forest due to World Heritage. At the same time, since the declaration he had accepted that there was a role for re-vegetating some areas and supporting wildlife. It seemed that over time he had taken some steps towards rethinking his sense of place based upon the change that was imposed on his industry.

> A20M: …today we've gone the reverse. They want to see the bloody trees grow and the birds flying around I love me birds and that sort of thing but see as you get older that changes too see. Like I don't mind planting a few trees and feeding my birds out here and looking after my bloody bandicoot there that I got from about that big 2 years ago and Charlie here couldn't fly when I picked him up at the drain there and that sort of thing. I actually like that, always have done, been interested in that sort of thing. But because you're getting older and you, and you seeing the way the system has gone from what we liked doing when we were kids to what we can do today well you know, you sort of change with it.

It is worth noting that A20M emphasised the role of age in this change. He seemed to think that with time he adapted his sense of self and sense of place to the circumstances around him.

4.2.8.5 Native Title

A6M was a young man of the Barbarrum people and he was greatly influenced by a recent Native Title determination recognising Barbarrum traditional country. He spoke

from a personal perspective and described the effect of this recognition as encouraging him to further develop his understanding of his people's country by learning from elders and participating in the activities of an outstation and training programs.

4.2.8.6 Disability

Two of the participants in this study indicated that becoming partially disabled played a role in influencing their sense of place. For both A15F and W3M, their chosen place became an environment where their disability didn't stop them from living their lives. For both of them place was focussed on managing this disability. For A15F she found she could care for her daughter and grand daughter living on the same property in a different house. She could also look out on a view that she found spectacular and reminded her of her childhood. Before she became sick she used to go bushwalking and adventuring to enjoy nature experiences. Since she was infirm she appreciated the fact that in the Atherton Tablelands she felt close to nature, and had access to nature by going for drives in the car.

> A15F:… [in the Atherton Tablelands] you get all these wonderful rainforests and trees and waterfalls and rivers and I just find it a very attractive place. I like the wildlife, the bird life particularly… I used to do a lot of bushwalking. We lived in New Zealand for a long time. I mean New Zealand's incredibly beautiful too but, I don't know, I find the beauty here sort of accessible. You know you can go into it … we go out for little jaunts in the car.
>
> I: Is that how you access the beauty here?
>
> A15F: Through the car?… yeah …

Fundamental to A15Fs sense of the Atherton Tablelands was a level of comfort and access to health services that she required due to her disability. For example she needed to be able to get to a pharmacy and a hospital relatively quickly and easily. As such, the

Atherton Tablelands represented an appealing combination for her – she could enjoy an impression of rural space yet at the same time have access to health services.

For W3M, his property in Woodstock was where he could be productive despite losing most of his eyesight. It was a place where he could operate machinery without fear of hurting someone else, and where his wife could help him when necessary.

4.2.9 Other influences

Some of the influences on sense of place didn't fall easily into any of the broad themes discussed in this chapter. Of the participants who moved to their place during adulthood, A9F2 was the only one who explained her core influences on place in spiritual terms. After finding herself drawn to the district for its particular climate and social composition, A9F2 described a process where her place chose her rather than vice versa. She was unique in that she didn't describe any other major influence on her sense of place such as growing up in a particular environment or seeking a bush mythology but did mention the minor influence of living in the rainforest and finding it too wet, dark and mouldy. Following this she was strongly drawn to travelling in savanna country west of the Tablelands and in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Then one day, whilst driving around the Walsh River district she explained:

> A9F2…we drive back the same way and, passing here again the side and it yelled. It, it, something yelled at me…stop now! I would have driven on, and I actually stopped the car and I thought, here it is again. I said to my friend … there's something here. What is here?

Whilst her earlier travels had brought her to the western Tablelands she explained that these were minor influences that allowed her to be in a position to hear the voice speak

to her. For A9F2, the single largest influence on her sense of place was this spiritual experience that called her to her place.

Another influence on sense of place which doesn't fall directly into any of the other themes involved A17M and A17F. Both A17M and A17F were influenced by strong desire to look after their land, which was inherently part of their sense of self.

> A17M: I think we both had a philosophy that we were going to leave the land in a better shape than when we started, and I think we did …[we were] always a little bit trying to be environmentalist probably. We planted thousands and thousands of trees on our property. Before the rainforest idea became popular we were planting pine trees.

A17F and A17M also became involved with a local history society which influenced their sense of community and also provided them with stories with which to compare their own sense of place.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 The role of childhood influences

It is significant that all 16 of the participants who grew up in the case study locations described a strong childhood attachment to their place as a major influence on their sense of place. There was some variation in the way they described this influence, in some cases emphasising the strong influence of being shown how to engage with the place by a particular person. This is broadly consistent with research in Banks Peninsula, New Zealand that has shown how local ancestry was a key distinguishing feature in developing a strong sense of place, and how elements of sense of place were passed from parents to their children (Hay 1998). Several of the participants in my

study described learning about their environment from their parents. For example, many men described the strong childhood influence of accompanying their fathers or grandfathers into the fields and the forests and learning how to interact with their place.

Many participants described the influence of growing up in a particular social environment, and emphasised the importance of community support that they associated with a particular experience of childhood. This version of growing up in place was strong amongst female participants. Other participants who described the significance of growing up in place emphasised a particular sense of freedom to explore nature and a sense of protection. It is also important to acknowledge that this group of influences was integrated with other processes affecting sense of place. Some of these participants only became aware of the importance of growing up in a particular place after they moved away and experienced a different environment. When participants did describe influences on their sense of place in adult life, such as A16M's involvement with conservation groups on his family farm, these influences served to reinforce or develop something for which the foundations were already laid during their childhoods.

It is also important that eight of the 24 people who came to the case study locations as adults emphasised the significance of their rural childhoods in other locations as being a major influence in how they understand their sense of place in these locations. It is important to qualify that this was not universally the case: some participants who experienced rural childhoods elsewhere did not raise this as a key influence on their sense of the Atherton Tablelands. However, it remains that a majority of the participants interviewed for this study described the high importance of growing up in a

rural environment, either within the case study locations or elsewhere. As with those who grew up in the case study locations, there were differences in what it was about their rural childhoods elsewhere that influenced people's sense of place. The theme of independence and self reliance was important to some, whilst an apparently opposite theme of living in a supportive community was important for others. A further example of the importance of rural childhoods involves experiencing ecological loss during childhood. It was shown how one participant emphasised the powerful influence of seeing his childhood place destroyed.

Age was not always discussed in the interviews, however, there was a general indication that the ages people described when talking about their childhood experiences were the pre-teenage years from about the age of seven. For some participants, this is when they first recalled accompanying their parents whilst working around the farm. For others it was the age they recalled symbolic experiences of playing in the creeks. Many participants at this point in their lives were influenced by being in place with family and through the direct experience of playing in the places they became attached to. The importance of spending time with family in place and directly engaging with place through playing are both emerging as important influences on sense of place during this age range (Derr 2002).

In considering the relationship between developing sense of place in childhood and Piaget's theory of childhood development, it appears to be the case that the most formative stage of life for influencing sense of place corresponds roughly to Piaget's 'concrete operations' stage of childhood development. As Piaget explains, 'concrete

operations' are organised groups of thought that can be manipulated or known through the senses (Piaget 2001, p. 136). They are 'concrete' because they are tied to direct experience and action. Internalising their direct experiences and relationships with the physical and social world, this is the stage of childhood development that involves coming to terms with time and space:

> Now it so happens that while classes, relations and numbers are being formed, we can see the construction, in a remarkably parallel manner, of the qualitative groupings that generate time and space (Piaget 2001, pp. 159-160).

In discussing the background concepts for this thesis in section 3.1.6, it was shown how Relph (1976) suggests that forming a sense of place involves balancing assimilation and accommodation. It is interesting to note that the 'concrete operations' stage is when these twin processes first come into balance for the child (Piaget 2001). This gives weight to the idea that the concrete operations stage is important in forming a sense of place. It is the stage when children draw very strongly on concrete experience and first start to adjust their understanding to their experiences and vice versa (Piaget 2001).

4.3.2 Sense of place developed prior to arriving

One of the important issues emerging from people's influences on sense of place is that for many participants who moved to the place of the interview during adult life, their sense of place was well developed before they had arrived. This certainly applied to people who described the influence of growing up in rural areas elsewhere and for people who were influenced by a rejection of their urban lifestyles. In some cases, this clearly supported the principle that many researchers on place have borrowed from

symbolic interactionism, namely that their understanding of the place is shaped by what they go there to do. For example, several participants in this study went to their environment to be farmers and understood the place in a way that was consistent with this intention. But in many cases this was not the case. In several cases people went to the place because they felt attracted to it and then thought of what they were going to do there once they had arrived. For example, A14M and A14F described 'finding' the place they had been looking for after living in similar environments which influenced their sense of a perfect environment but which lacked some crucial feature. These participants had lived in many places and around the world. Through the rich and varied experiences of different places they constructed in their own minds an idea of a perfect place for them. One day they were on holiday in the Tablelands and chanced upon a property which for the first time in their lives met all their criteria as their perfect place and they bought it two days later:

> A14M: We were looking for years and years for something nice, something both of us liked and this was it.
>
> A14F: Yeah.
>
> I: Can you tell me what it was you liked about it?
>
> A14F: It was just so beautiful we had this fantastic mountain in front of us and it was tranquil and it was just so beautiful… we just fell in love with the place immediately and said yes this is it and he liked it and I liked it and that was the first time in seventeen years of marriage that we actually found something that we both liked …
>
> A14M: …I mean there was always the big question mark, what to do with the property…

It was clear from the interview that they had a well developed sense of their perfect place well before they arrived in the Tablelands, and when they saw this property whilst on holiday they knew it was for them. This partly evidenced by the fact that their emphasis on 'looking for years and years' for the right place. Yet it was only after they

had arrived there that they thought about what they wanted to do with the place, and they were still pondering this nine months later at the time of the interview.

4.3.3 Seeking belonging

The cases demonstrate how several of the interviewees defined the Atherton Tablelands by its opposition to a place where they were unfulfilled in some way. This was partly associated with a sense of space and partly associated with access to nature. Underlying influences on sense of place for these participants were two important themes. The first was that they wanted to live in a social context where they understood the relationships between people and felt part of a community. Essentially they were seeking to belong in a social context. The second aspect was that they wanted to live in a context where they could see and understand the natural environment around them and how the social environment interacted with it. It was important for these people to live on farms, to eat locally produced foods and to see where their water comes from. They showed strong signs of desiring to belong to a place – to be embedded in the social and ecological systems around them. Yet it is also important to consider that these participants were frequently disappointed by the reality of place. Though they were seeking to be part of a community they found it difficult to meet people and to make deep friendships. Also of interest is that whilst they wanted to live amongst farms and forests, they generally didn't want to work in and amongst these environments so much as see them around them (this is discussed in section 5.2.1). By contrast, a minority of participants were not seeking to belong to a community and were strongly motivated by profit. They viewed

the Atherton Tablelands as a place where they could be more profitable at doing what they do. Other than that the place didn't hold any special significance for them.

4.3.4 A significant minority: post arrival influences on place

Only a minority of participants described significant influences on their sense of place that occurred after their arrival. Some of these influences involved specific experiences that radically changed people's sense of place, such as a family member dieing and broader societal events such as the declaration of World Heritage. One of the most significant experiences of this type was becoming pregnant. Three of the 17 women interviewed for this thesis (all from the Atherton Tablelands case study) described how this experience radically changed their lives and how this was a major influence on their sense of place.

With the exception of the impact of falling pregnant, the influences on sense of place that people described after arriving were less powerful than those that brought them there. For other participants, less radically experiences served to develop the sense of place that they brought with them. For example, A14M and A14F's experiences with the wildlife on their property influenced their sense of place by developing their understanding of ecology of their place. Participant W4F learned more about the social aspects of her place by sending her children to the local school and getting to know the local community, which served to enhance her understanding and appreciation of the place where she chose initially for work reasons only.

4.3.5 Local food, place and embeddedness

In this study several participants who moved to the area described wanting to be more connected to their place by eating locally produced food. Participant A1F for example described the importance of buying her meat from a local grazier directly. Another example was A14M and A14F who went to a market that specialised in locally grown organic fruit and vegetables. They expressed the importance of going to the market and talking to the people who grew the food about the conditions under which it was grown. Some participants wanted to grow and eat their own food for these reasons and others preferred to buy locally grown food rather than buying it from a supermarket. There was overlap between locally produced food and organically produced food, but more people were interested in the former than the latter. This became clear in one interview when participants disagreed with a local shop selling organically grown food produced overseas. The products were rejected because they had travelled too far. A strong component to the theme of connecting to a place through food was meeting and trusting the people who produced the food. The role of local food in sustainability has been discussed by DeLind (2002) who proposes the term of "civic agriculture" to represent food that is locally grown, distributed and consumed. The increasing popularity of such food is characterised in opposition to the effect of globalisation which obscures the links between consumers and produces of food. Civic agriculture is expressly holistic, linking people and place through local and regional farming.

In this doctoral research, analysis showed that consuming locally grown food was one of the ways people became embedded in local places. Their reasons for doing so were

consistent with other studies of embeddedness and local agriculture which emphasise a perceived health benefit from locally produced foods and principles of promoting fair trade in local social networks (Winter 2003). One of the criticisms of embeddedness is that in the process of constructing locally produced food as being strongly positioned in a social network, selective use of the term 'embeddedness' falsely implies that globalised food production is somehow outside of social relations (Krippner 2001; Winter 2003). However, the analysis conducted for this thesis indicates that this critique of embeddedness misses a fundamental component of the concept. Whilst all forms of agriculture are embedded in social relations, local forms of agriculture have been attractive in the face of globalisation because the nature of these relations is more visible. As such embeddedness is not so much an issue of social relations so much as one of recognition and equity. This becomes even more important when we turn to the relationships between society and nature. The concept of 'embeddedness' is focussed on acknowledging these relationships that have become obscured through western philosophy (Plumwood 2002). It is about living in such a way that humans are more aware of their position in relation to nature. These themes will be further discussed in concluding the thesis (see sections 8.4.4 and 8.4.5).

4.4 Chapter conclusion

There are three inter-related conclusions that can be drawn from the cases presented in this chapter. The first is that early influences on sense of place are fundamentally important. This was more the case for people who still live in the place where they grew up, but also for many who moved to the place of interview as adults. For a

majority of the participants interviewed in this study, the childhood years played a strong influence on the way they came to understand places later in life. Following on from the first conclusion, the second conclusion is that for most participants who moved to the place of the interview during adulthood, the influences on their sense of place were developed before they arrived. This led them to bring with them a well established sense of the place. Many of those who came to the case study locations as adults were seeking to belong to local communities. This leads to third conclusion which is that since arriving, most participants did not describe further strong influences on the sense of the place.

Chapter 5 Identity, place and practice

5.1 Chapter introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the research question focussed on the relationship between sense of place and activities in practice. Like chapter four it groups the responses into a series of themes. Several of these themes are interrelated and these relationships are discussed throughout the chapter. These themes describe different ways that people experienced place, observed place, changed place and took care of place.

5.2 Principal themes

5.2.1 Veranda gazing

The first of these themes refers to people who wanted to live in a place, to enjoy looking at a certain view, and to talk about it with their friends, neighbours and family. Direct engagement with their place, such as working on the farm or walking around the forest was not a major dimension to their sense of place. This theme was most common amongst people who were influenced by rejecting urban life and who were re-connecting with a rural childhood. Examples of people who fell into this category were people who rented a house on someone else's farm. They were people who wanted to live closely connected to rural life but work in town and observe forests or farming activity from their veranda on the weekends. Some of these participants contributed to the management of a property on weekends, but it was not their main focus of activity.

Some of these participants conveyed a sense of wanting to be able to see the links between social and natural systems around them. It was important to them to know where their food came from, but not actually to grow it themselves. Another theme to this group of responses involved special activities to experience nature or rural life. Often using terms like 'lifestyle' these people described a practical dimension to their place in the form of recreation such as driving to a favourite spot to go for walks in the bush or picnics by the water. Mostly this practical dimension to place was more of an idea than a reality. When asked about the nature and frequency of these experiences, most participants indicated that these experiences were occasional and symbolic, and that the rest of the time they were engaged in paid employment or domestic activity.

Participant A1F lived out her sense of place by renting a house on someone else's farm and working in a nearby town helping disabled people. She found this arrangement suited her because she could become integrated into the rural community through her work. She also liked living on the farm and getting to know her neighbours. She spent a lot of time visiting people around the district and talking to people in the pub. She liked the fact that she could buy much of her food from surrounding farmers who she had seen grow the crops or raise the animals. This was part of a feeling of belonging. She described a feeling of being very much a part of this agricultural community though she wasn't conducting any agriculture herself. She did, however, find that not everybody in the community was friendly towards her and this was disappointing. She was also disappointed because many of her friends had to move away from the district for work reasons. She had employment difficulties of her own when the funding ran out

for her own employment. After three years, she moved away from the district to work in an urban context.

Like participant A1F, A7M lived out his sense of place by renting a house on someone else's farm. The farm was on the edge of town and he could ride his bike to his job in Atherton. During the interview he showed where he enjoyed going for walks around the farm and where he liked to swim in the dam. He took pleasure in observing the farm animals and the native animals around the property, such as the platypus in the dam. Much of his time he liked to sit on the veranda and look out at the hills surrounding the farm where he sometimes went bushwalking and bike riding on weekends. Outside of the farm he also emphasised going for nature experiences in the forests and mountains and going for picnics with friends by lakes or other scenic spots in national parks.

When A11F1 came to the Atherton Tablelands to work on a cultural arts project, the way her sense of place translated into practice involved spending time with the Ngadjonji people and sitting listening to their stories about their place. This was particularly important since she had a child with a young Ngadjonji man and she wanted her child to grow up with the opportunity to know about her father's culture. Over time she lost contact with her Ngadjonji friends, many of whom left the district, including the father of her child. Since then she continued to raise her child whilst living on her (anglo) family's property, and worked part time in town. Though she was mostly busy with work and her child, she still helped out her family sometimes with spraying lantana

and caring for the animals. Since A11F2 had come to live with her, they spent a lot of time talking together. They also went for horse rides around the district.

Like her stepsister A11F1, the practice aspects of A11F2's sense of place mostly involved living on the family farm and working in town. She enjoyed going for horse rides around Malanda and out to a friend's property outside of town where she described a sense of freedom she associated with being out in the bush. She indicated that these long rides were a mechanism to experience the mythology of the Australian outback. They were not focussed on achieving any particular outcome other than breathing fresh air and experiencing a sense of time and space that A11F2 hadn't previously experienced. She also described spending long evenings talking with the family over meals and enjoying a much more relaxed lifestyle to what she had known in the city. She helped A11F1 with care for her young child by offering to baby sit for her. She also contributed to the running of the farm by feeding the animals. Like A11F1, the practice of her sense of place was mostly associated with spending time with family and relaxing following her paid job.

Whilst participants A12M and A12F started farming flowers, what they preferred doing was sitting around at home and looking at the view or going for walks by the lake. During the interview they described how much they enjoyed looking out over the agricultural landscape that surrounded the house. They liked to look at the cows scattered across green hills into the distance from the comfort of their home. In addition, they liked to go and sit next to the creek to enjoy the peace and quiet of their 5 hectare property:

> A12F: We've got a nice little waterfall down at our place, just a little swimming hole.
>
> I: Yeah?
>
> A12F: We really want to put a little trail in and eventually put a path in near it and a nice little seat.
>
> I: Sounds lovely
>
> A12F: Yeah it'll be nice actually. You go down there and you can just sit and listen to the water and it's really relaxing. You see the platypus there…

Actually doing agriculture was incidental to their grand scheme which was more focussed on relaxing and enjoying being surrounded by a combination of agricultural and natural scenery. The way this scheme translated in practice is discussed in section 5.2.2.

On arrival in the Tablelands, A13M and his late wife purchased a ten hectare ex-dairy farm to plant an orchard as a small experiment rather than a serious commitment to production. It turned out not to be profitable but this was not a major concern to A13M. Before his wife died, A13M used to include a small element of production on his property by grazing a few beef cattle. More recently he had given this up and moved into town. He spent time with family who lived in the area and with friends he had met through his involvement with local community organisations. During the interview we sat on his veranda where A13M told me how he liked to sit and look at the creek:

> A13M: One of the reasons why I bought this place was its location overlooking the river here. My favourite start to the day is to have a mug of coffee overlooking the river and watching the platypus swim, and there are lots of water dragons. I enjoy that very much…

Since participant A15F became limited in her movement due to her disability, living out her sense of place in practice didn't involve much physical activity. She spent most of her time on the balcony where she loved to sit and look at the view. In particular she liked to watch the native birds, the farm horses and the cattle that she had on agistment

from her neighbour. A15F was specially happy to look out at the cows, which reminded her of the farming district where she grew up.

> A15F: …so the arrangement is that in return for us having the cows he will maintain the fences …it's a great arrangement because I, we really like having the cows. I mean I think they add to the vista but none of them ours …I keep thinking well it's ridiculous I mean we've got all this place and we should get some cows and I'm quite keen on getting a few cows to run you know but… [my husband] isn't very keen on the idea…

A15F emphasised that hosting the cattle was not for financial benefit, as there was no exchange of money in this arrangement, A15F and her husband hosted the cattle in exchange for the other party maintaining the fences. As it happened the neighbour had failed to fulfil his end of the bargain but this was of little importance to A15F because she wanted to look at the cows as part of her 'vista'. From her point of view, these animals were not there for economics or production, they were there for aesthetics.

The practice of A18M's sense of place was all about living in and belonging to a rural community. He wanted to live amongst farmers and small shopkeepers. For much of his period in the Atherton Tablelands he lived on farms but didn't do any farming himself. Rather he continued to work in his role as a priest with a focus on being involved with and supporting the people around him. He also emphasised the importance of raising his children in this context:

> A18M: …we lived out on the farm for a while, out towards Bartle Frere which was so wet that was a bit difficult. But it was still a good place. We wanted our kids to have a chance to grow up in the country…

Though he didn't do any agricultural work of his own, it was important to him to live and raise his children in a context where this was going on around him. He wanted to talk with the members of his church community and observe the agricultural landscape around him.

5.2.2 Making the land produce

Several of the participants interviewed for this research emphasised that at least part of the practical dimension of their sense of place was focused on making the land produce. Generally, this involved determined efforts to manipulate the ecology of a place, such as introducing new species for pasture or clearing on certain plants that were considered weeds. For some of these participants such as A3F and W7M the practice of their places was almost exclusively concerned with this theme. For others such as A8F it was sufficient that the land contributed to the household groceries.

For A3F the practical dimension of place was focussed on efficient and profitable dairy production. She had enhanced the productive capacity of her farm through investing as much as possible in such inputs as fertilizers and feed supplements. Through efficiencies in farm management she had prospered in a challenging time for her industry, and this allowed her to purchase surrounding farms and enhance their productive capacities. At the time of the interview, she was in conflict with natural resource management agencies because they disagreed with her practice of providing her cows with access to creeks. She rejected the idea of fencing off creek banks because it would mean 'losing' valuable productive land and restricting her access to water. A3F had a very strong identity as a farmer, but not specially tied to any particular industry or place. She was not interested in ecological relationships outside of her farm. Those on her farm that she was interested in were focused on increasing production only, such as management of weeds.

The practice of A10M's sense of place focussed on forestry and grazing. Having grown up in a world focussed on removing vegetation for grazing animals, he focussed his activities in these two areas. As a teenager he did contract logging with a team of bullocks. This required him to acquire and clear paddocks to rest his animals. Over his life time the clearing industry expanded and became more mechanised and he embraced this change and benefited from it. At the same time, he raised beef cattle on the paddocks he bought originally for resting his bullock teams. Throughout most of his 82 years in the Atherton Tablelands, the practice of his sense of place rewarded him with social recognition and financial benefit. Whilst society underwent massive change in this time, in areas of mechanisation, industrial development and population change, he continued to be rewarded for harvesting timber and clearing paddocks for grazing. He always had a sense that the Atherton Tablelands needed to be cleared in order to support society. From the late 1980s, a threat to A10Ms sense of self and sense of place involved a societal shift to reduce clearing, culminating in the declaration of World Heritage over much the district. A10M rejected the rise of conservation as something he didn't like or comprehend. Furthermore he didn't accept or comprehend the increase in tourists who came to drive around the district and never seemed to get out of their cars. At the time of the interview, he continued to graze cattle on a few paddocks, and occasionally harvest timber from privately owned land, but essentially he could no longer live out his sense of self and sense of place in practice, and this frustrated him.

Having only just exited the dairy industry A19F's described her activities in practice being entirely focussed on operating her former dairy farm. The farm she could afford to lease was old and run down with gaps in the fences and dairy equipment which

required repairs and maintenance. Much of the practice of her sense of place focussed on maintaining this infrastructure and spraying the weeds with herbicide. Above all, her sense of place was about milk production. Most of her description concerning practical aspects of her place involved maintaining and increasing her herd size to enhance production. She used a lot of agricultural chemicals to treat weeds and cattle diseases. She was concerned about the health effects of these on her self and her children, however, her concerns about the health risks of using poisons was secondary to maintaining a productive herd. At the time of the interview, A19F was adjusting to a new place – a rural residential block of land where she was in the process of contemplating what to do next.

For A22M the chaos of living in a period of intense transformation seemed to have resulted in an approach to making the most of opportunities as they arose. What was common throughout most of his life was being in the middle of transforming places by hand – clearing land, harvesting trees and droving cattle through the bush. Fundamental to the practice of his sense of place was productivity – throughout his life he focussed on producing and harvesting. Early in life, his sense of the Atherton Tablelands involved moving around from job to job in the mining, transport and forestry industries harvesting timber and mining tin. This was followed by several years away from the Tablelands working on remote cattle stations producing beef but still being connected to the Tablelands through family. When his father died he came back to the western Tablelands to farm fruits and vegetables after irrigation started to become available. He expressed the extent to which changes in technology and society affected him and his

sense of place in practice. As machinery and transportation became more accessible he expanded his production and supplied supermarkets in Cairns with fruits.

The practical dimension of W3M's sense of place was focussed around continuous hard work to increase the productivity of his grazing property. Knowing that his property was small by grazing standards he worked hard to make it as productive as possible. This meant planting introduced pasture species and clearing vegetation that harm cattle or make them difficult to muster, such as chinee apple and rubber vine. He carefully recorded details of his herd so he could determine which individual cows are more reproductive than others. In addition to working the fields, he payed keen attention to the latest pastoral research to find ways to boost his production. He also continually sought information from other graziers and has found the 'cell grazing' approach to farming appealing. Participant W3F shared W3M's goal of increasing the productivity of their farm. Given his impaired vision, she repeatedly helped him with tasks such as slashing weeds and spraying poison. At the time of the interview she was in the process of researching a newly discovered weed called Flannel grass.

The practical dimension of place for W7M was focused on growing potatoes and pumpkins. These were both crops that he had grown all his life and his father grew before him. His efforts to produce these crops involved being actively engaged in trying to kill wild pigs which came to eat his crop. W7M had to change the varieties he grew to suit market requirements. He saw this as very unfortunate because the varieties favoured by the market were less nutritious, less tasty and harder to grow, being more prone to disease than other varieties. He also required more fertilizes and insecticide to

be able to grow a crop fit for the market. Enhancing production also involved coming up with ways to protect his creek banks which were vulnerable to washing away during heavy rain. He couldn't afford to conduct much engineering work to stabilise his banks. However, in contrast to the advice of land management agencies, he thought clearing vegetation from the banks would help stabilise them. He was in conflict with these agencies which refused to let him clear.

The theme of exclusive focus on production also characterised the practical aspects of A20M's sense of place, who spent most of his life clearing 'rubbish' and 'scrub' vegetation to allow the land to become productive. This is further discussed in section 5.2.3 under the theme of crafting a particular landscape.

The practice of W1M's sense of place involved being out in the fields where he was planting legumes and grasses collected from within Australia and South America to see how effective they were for raising cattle. These activities were related to a strong sense of purpose related to improving the beef economy in northern Australia and a sense of achievement when some of the trials produced impressive results. W1M described a 'hay day' in the 1970s when the research station was thriving with a staff of 17 workers including stockmen, carpenters and mechanics all engaged in coming up with ways to make the industry more productive. In some ways, the practice of his place involved remembering those 'hay days' of production.

W2M's sense of place resulted in dedicated efforts to increase the productivity of the farm. He invested in irrigation, fencing and introducing more productive pastures to increase the carrying capacity of the land. When he was younger he cleared a lot of the

country to encourage grasses. Since then he learned that introducing legumes was a way of increasing the productivity of his pastures whilst allowing some of the trees to grow back. He preferred this because he found the trees aesthetically pleasing and he liked to provide habitat for native birds and mammals. W2M's concern for wildlife will be further discussed under the theme of care for place in section 5.2.6.

For W4F, the practice of her place involved establishing a particular agricultural operation in the form of a horse breeding property. This involved installing considerable infrastructure including stables and fences. Most of her vegetation was suitable for horses from the beginning, however, she cleared about a fifth of her property that was covered in 'rubbish' vegetation such as tea tree and unproductive grasses. Whilst these were her principal activities, she also found time to enjoy the tranquillity of the district and observe the wildlife that thrived on her property. In particular, she liked to observe the kangaroos and wallabies. She also got to know people in the community through occasional attendance at social events and sending her children to the local school.

W6M inherited a portion of the family farm when his father died. Whilst the family farm was strongly focussed on cattle farming he didn't find it fulfilling. He did not have the same interest in increasing production that his father had. Instead he progressively sold off portions of his land and reduced the scale of his operation. Furthermore, in contrast to other participants who associated place with agricultural production, W6M was not inclined to maintain farm infrastructure or add fertilizers. Rather the form of production he preferred was to host cattle on agistment and more or less leave them to

look after themselves. Despite this, his way of reading the land was still strongly associated with agricultural production. He described trees in terms of their uses as timber around the farm and animals in terms of their affect on beef productivity.

For A5M sense of place was strongly associated with long hours in the fields tending his crop of mangos. To increase production of a saleable crop he embraced a range of high input practices for growing his product, controlling insects and presenting his mangos for market. He was very serious about his mango production and recently he had expanded his capacity to store his product in sheds and spray it with ethylene to help time its ripening. Whilst others in the district had suffered due to structural change in their industries, he had protected himself by diversifying into other crops that were less vulnerable.

For A16M the practice of his place had a strong focus on the long term productivity of his dairy farm whilst minimising inputs such as fertilizers and feed supplements. He described his activities as conducting a constant and careful balance between herd size and carrying capacity of the land. Whilst others in the district responded to the pressures of dairy de-regulation by increasing their farming inputs, he made himself more profitable by *reducing* these inputs. Since he took over the farm from his father he had increased his herd size four fold and his milk productivity 10 fold whilst keeping costs low. This had involved changing his grasses to more productive species and introducing glycine which reduced his fertilizer applications. He developed a cheap but innovative technique to crush his unpalatable grasses that grow in the wet season into a mulch to assist pasture nutrition for the next season. He had also increased production

by paying careful attention to developments in the genetics of cattle breeding. By fencing off the creeks and installing watering points he had increased production by spreading the grazing pressure more evenly. He explained how he saved time and money when it came to mustering his cattle, and keeping his machinery out of these areas. Since inheriting the farm, he had also planted clumps of trees to provide shade for cattle and he believed this increased their milk production because they were more content. He had found ways for some of these trees to play a role in conservation schemes by serving as wildlife corridors. The practical dimensions of place for A16M are further discussed under the theme of caring for place in section 5.2.6.

Participant A8F emphasised that rural production was a part of her sense of place. The theme of making the land produce was not a major activity on her five acre property, but it was important to her that the land should produce some food.

> A8F: …I like to manage more for human use and some biodiversity but definitely human use as well like the land produces something so yeah…
>
> I: And what are those things?
>
> A8F: Fruit, habitat for animals, vegetables, bush foods pasture for animals so like I've got horses, sometimes I've got cows…

This inclusion of productivity for A8F seemed symbolic. She did not consider herself as a primary producer, but she did want the land to contribute to the household food supplies.

It has been shown in section 4.2.7 that for participants A12M and A12F making the land produce was a small and symbolic aspect of a much wider plan. Their emphasis was to live in a rural context, however, to legitimise this dream they wanted to conduct some form of primary production. After purchasing a five hectare run down ex-dairy

farm whilst still working in Townsville they spent a year travelling to the property on weekends to tidy it up and to consider some form of production they could engage in. They were looking for a form of agriculture that allowed them considerable free time and which a husband wife team could undertake. Putting their sense of place into practice required selecting an industry which didn't require much land, money, infrastructure or experience. They chose flower farming.

> A12M:… it was a decision that we'd made that we wanted live up here and then we needed to do something so that was the sort of the way we looked at it, but always with this thought that went back many many years that we'd like to do some sort of work on the land …on one of our visits we actually came to this flower farm and naively we thought oh we can do that, we can grow flowers…

When they started growing flowers they were surprised by the amount of work required to maintain their farming operation and how much administration and account keeping they needed to do. For several years they persevered but at the time of interview they were thinking about selling up and stopping farming.

For A14M and A14F, an organic approach to production from the land had been an important part of the way their sense of place translated into practice. One of the core underlying reasons for them to come to rural Australia was to escape from the high input farming systems they have known in Europe and which they associated with environmental and health risks. In particular they were strongly against the use of fertilizers because they affected the catchment downstream, and hormones because they were a health risk. Emphasising that the land can support sufficient production without these inputs in Australia, they introduced cattle to the paddocks at low densities and restored the fences to keep them out of the surrounding rainforest. They also introduced poultry for eggs and for meat which were raised in an organic way. They wanted to be

able to raise, butcher and eat their own livestock as well as sell some to the meat market for sale as organic beef.

As discussed in section 4.2.1, A17F was influenced by a strong desire to be on the land, and A17M was reluctant to do dairy farming but circumstances were against him. In practice dairy farming became their main engagement with the land. They described working hard and increasing the productivity of their pastures with fertilizers. A17M emphasised the significance of fertilizers which he saw as the saviour of many farms after years of poor pastures. A17M worked as a technician for a period taking part in government research into fertilizer applications. A17M and A17F also took an interest in the dairy productivity across the district and became involved in the local branch of their dairy industry body for several years. Despite their relative success, A17M and A17F emphasised that dairy production wasn't the exclusive focus of their sense of place. Rather they described leading rich lives which included travel and participating in volunteer and professional roles outside of the farm. These included involvement with the local history society and working as a part time reporters for the ABC.

For A21M and A21F, sense of place was about working hard on the farm to grow a product they were proud of. In the early days A21M worked hard on other people's farms and experienced hardship to establish a context where he was independent to shape his own destiny and raise his family. After many years when he could afford his own land he chose a block of 'bush' that had soil suitable for growing tobacco and was located with access to irrigation and good access to town. He cleared it and grew tobacco and took pride and care in growing his product which won awards for its

quality. Over this time the family developed a strong attachment to the farm and raised chickens and grew Italian vegetables like they did at the farm A21M grew up on. After experiencing several years of price manipulation in the tobacco industry A21M and A21F chose to diversify into a crop where the grower had an increased ability to set the price of the product and they chose coffee which they grew, processed and distributed within the family. They did this to be independent of the influence of large corporations that manipulate prices and reduce the independence of the farmer. At the time of the interview, for A21M and A21F sense of place continued to be about farming coffee, working hard and trying to be independent. Their farm was the expression of their lives in Australia. It represented their values of hard work and pride in their product. They defined their sense of self by the quality of this product and this included taking a 'mostly organic' approach to farming. This will be further discussed in section 5.2.6.

A9M and A9F1 were mostly opposed to agriculture, and this theme will be further explored under the heading of caring for place. However, the idea of self sufficiency in food (as well as energy) production underpinned some of the activities conducted by A9F1 and A9M. They explained how they struggled to maintain vegetable and herb gardens despite low nutrient soils and continuous grazing by wallabies. A9F1 differed from both A9M and A9F2 in her approach to self sufficiency because she raised chickens for egg production and as a source of entertainment for their children. The chickens were kept in a cage which was moved around the property in such a way that in addition to house hold food scraps, the chickens ate environmental weeds around the property.

I: What's your interest in chooks?…

> A9F2 We don't want any…
>
> A9F1: …so I guess it's me. I'm the chook person [chuckle].
>
> I: You're the chook person?
>
> A9F2: She wants animals [laughing].
>
> A9F1: I mean also for the kids you know I'm conscious of things to keep them happy and a variety of stimulas (sic) and also you know wanting to develop more self sufficiency and I was thinking along the lines of the fact that they can be weeders. They provide manure because , actually we've found that it's very hard to get organic manure from anywhere on the Tablelands…

The role of making the land produce was very complex for these participants. On one hand they were against farming and introduced species. On the other hand they wanted to grow their own (introduced) vegetables and raise chickens. Some of these issues will be taken up in the discussion following these themes.

5.2.3 Crafting a particular landscape

Following on from the theme of making the land productive, much of what this involved was selectively removing features of a place that were unproductive and encouraging others that contributed to production. Underlying this is the desire to make the land look a particular way. An example of this process is presented in figure 3.7 which shows a land clearing contractor selectively removing vegetation to produce the rolling grasslands and scattered trees of a dairy farm in the Atherton Tablelands. This theme applied to some extent to all of the participants who were directly engaged in agricultural production. However, it varied considerably amongst participants. W3M and W3F for example were adamant about removing chinee apple and rubber vine which restricted the movement of cattle on their relatively small grazing property. They also emphasised the efforts they had gone though to encourage more palatable pastures, such as aerial spraying of legumes. W3M was angry at surrounding farmers who were

unconcerned about the spread of chinee apple, creating more opportunities for his own farm to be affected by the plant. Like W3M, participant A3F spoke very strongly of her dedicated efforts to radically alter the ecology of her property to make it more productive. She was also angry at surrounding farmers who allowed tobacco weed and lantana to grew on their farms which her own cows would eat from the other side of the fence.

One participant for whom the theme of crafting a landscape applied very strongly was A20M. For most of his life, the influences on A20M's sense of place translated directly into the practice of clearing trees. Some of the trees were cleared for timber and some were cleared for farming country. This land was cleared on a contract basis, some for cattle grazing or some for cropping. Frequently he would selectively leave small clumps of trees scattered around land for grazing. As such it is important to understand that A20M was directly engaged in the shaping of particular environments rather than the arbitrary removal of vegetation. From the a practical point of view, the trees he left provided shade for cattle and from an aesthetic point of view the clumps of trees appealed to A20M's impression of how the land should look. In addition, influenced by many years in the forests, sometimes he would selectively leave trees purely because he appreciated their quality as trees – certain species, shapes or formations of trees that impressed him. He also developed a strong respect and appreciation for certain types of timber and would spend much of his spare time going through the forests after logging to collect bits of trees that were left behind from the clearing process, notably stumps and large branches. He had turned some of this into furniture and sculptures, but most of it he was storing purely because he liked to preserve the timber. A20M's clearing

came to end following the rise of conservation and the declaration of World Heritage over much of the Atherton Tablelands. Since then he continued to collect wood from private properties, either for making furniture, sculptures or simply preserving the timber.

Though a great grandfather, W5M emphasised that he was still active in his old age. However, most of the practice of his place described during the interview occurred earlier in his life when European settlement of the Woodstock area was still relatively new. This participant was directly involved in the timber harvesting that gave Woodstock its name. Trained by his father as a wood chopper and carpenter, the way W5M's sense of place translated in practice centred on chopping down trees to convert them into railway sleepers, wood to supply furnaces, and lengths of timber for building houses. W5M had also tried his hand at farming potatoes and tomatoes and mustering cattle. Underlying all this was a focus on converting the inherent features of his place, principally the trees and soil, into the infrastructure that supported European style settlement.

A9F2 was mostly focused on caring for place and will be further discussed later in section 5.2.6. However, the practical dimension to A9F2's sense of place has also included a determined attempt to modify small portions of her place into something more familiar to her. Though she chose to live in an environment known for being hot and dry, she had attempted to create a small rainforest in this place through determined planting and watering:

> A9F2: …I've planted some canopy trees and little things under like happy plants and bird nest ferns, more lush looking things that we don't have here and that always has to be

> watered. Then I planted lots and lots and lots of [non native] fruit trees. A lot of them are caged because they're little. I'm watering them, hopefully they won't need it in time, and last Christmas we started a bamboo plantation. It's not a plantation yet but that's the idea. Different tropical bamboos to eat, and for construction, to sell for commercial…

Though she considered future commercial applications, at the time of the interview her gardening was for personal satisfaction and to provide vegetables to eat. She was the most successful gardener of the three people living on the property, and said this was because she had fenced much of her garden in three dimensions (such that it was a cage) to protect her vegetables and herbs from wildlife grazing.

5.2.4 Recreating

For many of the participants the way their sense of place translated in practice was focussed on recreating in a rural environment. These participants described activities like chasing wild pigs, rambling through the bush or going for a swim at the local dam. Inherent in their comments was a sense of freedom and lack of routine. Many of these participants emphasised the importance of sharing this sort of experience with their children as part of the joys of growing up in the bush.

Whilst for A5M the practice of his place was partly focused on the commercial growing of mangos, he also liked to enjoy the simple pleasures, open spaces and sense of security of his small agricultural district of Dimbulah. Each of his visits to Cairns and Brisbane confirmed his fears of traffic and theft that he associated with cities. Since having a young family he liked the idea that his children were ignorant of the dangers of cities. He explained that the advantage of his mango farm was that he could take time out when it suited him to take his kids swimming down at the creek or go pig hunting.

In this way, he liked to balance the hard work of mango farming with other aspects of lifestyle.

In addition to making the land produce discussed in section 5.2.2, the way participant A8F's sense of place translated in practice also involved a strong theme of recreation. Her place was situated on the edge of native forests and above all she wanted to provide a place of human recreation. She described how the practice of her place involved activities such as camping, playing with her children and horse riding. Inherent in this was the theme of an environment where her children could go running around or riding their bikes in the sort of rural freedom that she has experienced as a child.

> A8F: …I like it to be a real mixture of uses there and playing. I like to keep some areas free for playing in, living in, having people around, camping in, experimenting in I suppose too…

The way her sense of place was related to practice also involved helping to extend habitat for wildlife, and this is discussed in section 5.2.6.

Though it has been shown in section 5.2.1 that one of the main ways A13M interacted with his place was to sit and look at it, he also described a great fascination to go into the forests and be 'absorbed' by the experience. During the interview, A13M described experiencing one of his favourite parts of the Tablelands where he occasionally went for walks:

> A13M: My favourite one is a place near Lake Eacham…there's a path which goes along this creek. It's sort of invisible you have to know about it. You have to know that it's there. All you see from the road if you even notice anything at all is… a bridge over a very deep gully but you go down into that and walk along it and there's a series of waterfalls. There's the most magnificent king ferns. The biggest that I've seen around here, amazing ones, you are down in this deep gully walking along and surrounded by the forest and yet you really feel totally absorbed by it. It's its own world down there, it's a world of green and damp

> and yeah I love it that's my kid magic spot on the Tablelands. At the end of it all you have the joy of pulling off hundreds of leeches.

For participant A14M, sense of place included a very strong respect for nature. In practice this mostly involved activities to protect nature from the impact of his cattle farming, but it also included a strong desire to get amongst nature and get dirty. Living on the edge of Mount Bartle Frere, he described taking his rucksack and walking in the hills, sometimes traversing the mountain chain. He also liked to take his 4 wheel drive or his all terrain vehicle to go exploring dirt roads such as old forestry tracks.

5.2.5 Community events and festivals

In addition to playing a major role in converting the trees of Woodstock into the timber supplies that gave the town its name, for W5M there was a strong social dimension to the practice of his place. W5M was one of the instigators and key organisers of the Woodstock Bushman's Carnival. Furthermore, he was very active in community sporting events such as cricket matches between the large families of the district.

Whilst the way sense of place translated in practice for W1M was largely associated developing technical advances in agricultural production, like W5M he was also involved in organising the Woodstock Bushman's carnival. These efforts were aimed at uplifting social opportunities for the people of the town and donating proceeds to charity.

A9F1's sense of 'self sufficiency' extended to the social environments for her children to play in. She was also much more concerned about creating community cohesion and

fulfilment by coming together with other people in the valley. With a particular concern for the children of the district, she was active in organising community events such as theatre workshops.

> A9F1: I'm a bit of an idealist you know, I dream about having a community that works together and creating our own entertainment, our own lifestyle, not just [being] self sufficient in terms of food but self sufficient in terms of interesting things to do, and our children being able to grow mentally as well as physically. Lots of stimulation I think that's really important. I'm not really into the whole isolation thing., myself because I want to live in a healthy environment...

5.2.6 Care for place

A further theme to the responses was focussed on looking after a place. There were several versions of this. For an Indigenous elder, looking after place was a cultural responsibility. Another form of looking after place involved the several farmers who conveyed a strong sense of caring for their farm, either for personal benefit or respect for family tradition. In a similar vein, some participants emphasised pride in their place and wanted to show it off to visitors and tourists. Some participants had a strong sense of protecting nature and focussed the practical dimensions of their sense of place on caring for wildlife and vegetation.

W2M expressed strong pride in the family farm which he inherited from his father and which one day would be passed on to his son. Whilst on one hand he prided himself on his productivity as a grazier, W2M was also proud of the wildlife and the general health of the farm and retired one paddock from production to support habitat for wildlife. He also adapted his burning regime because he was concerned about the effects on ground dwelling wildlife such as squatter pigeons. W2F shared W2M's efforts to encourage wildlife and she described how she fed the squatter pigeons that lived on her lawn. In

addition to increasing production and looking after wildlife, both A2M and A2F were very focussed on the family dimensions of their place. Between them they attempted to create an environment where their children could enjoy playing outdoors, and where the family sat around together to enjoy barbeques.

In addition to the themes of production discussed in section 5.2.2, A8F's place was strongly associated with conservation. Working for a wage in an NRM agency she wanted to distinguish between her professional natural resource management activities and the experience and love for her five acre property. Arriving in the area following the declaration of World Heritage, she wanted to contribute to nature conservation in her own way by purchasing ex-dairy land and rehabilitating it. She explained that she wanted to be part of the process of restoring rainforest vegetation and providing habitat for animals. She wanted to live at the 'edge' of a natural system because this was where she liked to experience nature:

> A8F: The edges are always exciting. The edges always have got a lot of birds, a lot of animals, and you get to see them because a lot the time in Ravenshoe things are naturally camouflaged and you don't see a lot. You can hear them, but on the edges you can actually see them…

A14M and A14F chose their block of land because it had approximately equal areas of cattle paddocks and native rainforest that they wanted to keep and protect. For these participants, a strong element of the practice of their place was to live amongst nature and care for it. They emphasised spending time in the rainforest and the paddocks to remove lantana, pine trees and other vegetation that they saw as not belonging. They prioritised removing the lantana because of the way it choked the native vegetation, and emphasised that this was all done mechanically to avoid distributing poison into the

head waters of the Russell River. They spent much of their time getting to know the wildlife on their property and trying to find ways to avoid damaging their habitat. They also expressed care in the productive areas of the farm such as being careful to maintain fences good pasture cover for their cattle. Their ambition was to develop an eco-tourism venture on the property where they could showcase the ecological integrity of the area to international visitors. They wanted to be able to impress their visitors with the wildlife and also serve them beef from their own herd that was raised without hormones or fertilizers.

A16M had a strong ethic of caring for the family farm which was passed on to him from his father. He described a long term view of maintaining the farm as both an agricultural operation and habitat for wildlife. Looking after the farm partly involved a strong sense of caring for his herd and his pastures through a mixture of astute observation and innovative farming techniques. As already discussed under the theme of making the land produce in section 5.2.2, he had been coming up with ways to increase the productivity of his farm whilst minimising use of chemical fertilizers and other inputs, and this included turning rank grasses into mulch and planting clumps of trees to provide shade for cattle. His care for the farm also extended beyond the productive parts of the farm. For example, he spent several years revegetating 17 hectares of the property that are outside of production, focussed around the two kilometres of riparian zone on his property upstream from the Malanda water supply. He called his revegetation work a hobby which supports habitat for native wild life. This work involved working closely with conservation groups who were interested in his farm as part of a network of wildlife corridors.

A17M and A17F described a strong ethic to love and look after their farm. This included a strong desire to care for the soil and pastures, as well as an emphasis on planting trees and caring for the appearance of the property.

> I: Can you tell me about … this philosophy of leaving the land in better shape than when you arrived? Could you tell me how it was when you arrived?
>
> A17M: It was very run down. The people that occupied the land in the first place didn't understand it… they were told that this was marvellous land, that it was fertile, it'd grow anything and so forth but it wasn't like that at all … the fertility was just a bit of stuff on the top that had built up in the organic matter of the rainforest but within a very short time the marvellous pastures …wouldn't grow anymore. When I took over after the war we had a farm of grass and bracken fern and all the weeds you could think of that wouldn't run a cow to five acres and she couldn't produce milk on it … the pastures were pretty bad in 1940s and 50s mainly because of over stocking… the people thought that it'd carry a lot more cattle than it would.
>
> I: OK.
>
> A17M: So we hoped to make it better than that but what I really meant was that, some other farmers that we knew of didn't believe in spending money on their farm. They were going to take all they could off it and then move on and retire. Well that was never our philosophy we always put back, spent as much on our farm as ever we could and to make it presentable and look nice and not only better pastures but, so it was presentable and one, I don't know whether he was DPI or a CSIRO fellow, said it was one of the nicest looking farms on the Tableland … we used to go around and say oh, people love that farm, those people don't love their farm much.
>
> A17F: Yeah, you could tell you know, and we just …hoped to leave the place better than we when we came…

Their sense of care for the farm also included attempting to move towards an organic approach to farming such as introducing legumes to assist nitrogen fixation and reduce fertilizer inputs. Though they emphasised their hard work at attempting to do this, there efforts were often unsuccessful. When their children were old enough to take over the farm A17M and A17F stopped dairy farming and built a house on the farm because they still wanted to live on the farm and be near their children.

A21M and A21F cared very strongly for the family farm which served as an expression of all their efforts to build new lives for themselves in Australia. Though they were not fanatical about being organic and didn't quite qualify as organic, they explained that

they used safe and environmentally responsible farming techniques, giving examples of avoiding insecticide and using chicken manure as a fertilizer sourced from a nearby chicken farm. In addition to their commercial farming activities, their sense of place included looking after the private gardens surrounding the house full of flowers and Italian vegetables and having chickens wandering about like the farm A21M grew up on in Italy. The property had become such a strong part of A21M's identity that he continued to work it and live on it despite the fact that doctors told him he was too old for farm work and needed to retire. The family farm became such a strong part of A21F's identity that she rejected her plan to go away and study at university because it would impact on the farm.

Participant A23M described two interlinked aspects in terms of the practical dimension to his sense of place. As an elder of the Ngadjonji people, the first of these concerned looking after his traditional country. The second element was to walk around it and share his understanding with visitors. He considered himself fortunate because after many years working away from his country he found work as a ranger and guide which permitted him to maintain contact with his country on a daily basis.

> A23M: I think I'm very fortunate with the sort of job I've got here. I'm out there, I'm having contact with the wildlife and you know I'm seeing the trees and that. I'm seeing everything that I'm part of …

In addition, he was a spokesman and advocate of his place. In his ranger role he conducted tours for tourists and in his elder role he worked with management agencies such as the Wet Tropics Management Agency to manage the country appropriately. He also worked with universities and assisted students who wanted to learn about the rainforest and its cultural significance.

A young man of the Barbarrum people, A6M was still learning about the relationship between place, identity and practice. Up until the time of the interview he had put most of his efforts into learning about the traditional ways of looking after country. This included living on an outstation, following an Indigenous ranger course and learning about the plants of Barbarrum country from his grandfather. He had also been involved with the development of a cultural centre in a nearby town which provided information to tourists and visitors interested in Barbarrum culture.

The way A2M's sense of place was related to practice was associated with living in his outback community where he grew up, where his family still lived and where he wanted to continue to live amongst an environment which he saw as rich in social and natural history. He was proud of his place and wanted to look after the historical features of his place. This involved repairing and rebuilding mining cottages and mining infrastructure as part of a heritage tourism operation he developed with A2F. Together they had been promoting the area to visitors as an example of outback savanna lifestyle and history. Whilst for A2M this had been a case of building upon his life long interaction with his place, for A2F it was all a new experience. She shared the spirit of caring for the landscape with A2M but at the same time she was still learning what this place was about. She emphasised how the practice of her place had led to an increased sense of independence and taking control of her life.

A4M looked after his cattle farm because he believed that looking after nature made him money. He did this through low stocking rates, stock watering points, good fences and the rest is 'left to nature'. He said he never had a problem with weeds because his

low stocking rate helped maintain thick grass which prevented weeds from getting established. By fencing off the creeks and distributing water points around the farm he spread his grazing pressure evenly. It also meant that the creek beds were much healthier and he believed this increased the ecological, aesthetic and the real estate value of his farm. Although he didn't like lantana, he let it grow in the riparian zones because he believed strongly in leaving these areas entirely alone, or in his own terms, 'giving them back to nature'. Left undisturbed, he believed that over time healthy riparian zones would take care of themselves and this would raise the real estate value of his land. In the meantime it saved him time and money to keep his cattle away from them.

In section 4.2.2 it was shown that A9M was strongly influenced by his childhood experience of seeing nature destroyed and was influenced by a life long desire to protect and rehabilitate an area of native vegetation and provide habitat for wildlife. The way this translated in practice was more of a disposition and an awareness than a well defined series of activities. For example, if wallabies wanted to come into their dwelling he didn't try to keep them out, because the wallabies were there first. He also carefully monitored populations of quolls and other animals by observing for their droppings. With the help of A9F1 he also attempted to remove environmental weeds in an attempt to rehabilitate the environmental management flaws of previous owners. Both A9M and A9F1 also sought to live in a way that had minimum ecological impact beyond their property, and together they had taken a series of choices such as using photovoltaic energy for domestic power needs, collecting their water and fire wood by hand from within their property and not connecting to sewage infrastructure (not even septic).

A9M and A9F1 aimed to live in a context where the animals have just as much right to the land as the people. Overall, the practice of these participants' sense of place focused on stopping human activities which have the potential to negatively affect wildlife habitat.

> A9M: I had these ideas of coming here and doing nothing you know, being really pristine about it but I realized that that's not really realistic. You know there are limits to what you should or what I consider acceptable but there is some cost. It's just the nature of being human and carving out our own place so that's probably more the thing, how I've changed personally. I mean it's still really important for me that in living our lives here that we don't wind up with no squirrel gliders here any more or you know that sort of thing and that really needs researching just in the sense of really observing and working out which individual trees are really important for things or which species of trees…

In time A9M found that he had to compromise his ideals in order to survive. For example his initial refusal to kill rats with poison allowed a very large rat population to develop inside their house. Not only did this generate hygiene concerns in relation to their young children, it also attracted a population of snakes inside their house that became a threat to their lives. It was experiences such as these that prompted him and A9F1 to revisit their initial ideals and make some concessions. They also came to a realisation that some aspects of the place were beyond their powers of rehabilitation. As such, the practice of A9M and A9F1's place shifted from doing nothing to harm nature to a focus on reducing their impact on nature to a minimal level that supports human survival. They insisted on conducting as many activities as possible without the aid of mechanisation or infrastructure. For example, to make hot water for cleaning they first went and collected wood by hand then lit a fire in a wood stove. Similarly, their water comes from a nearby creek with only a basic means of pumping.

Interestingly, however, A9M and A9F1 continued to participate in broader society in many ways that seemed contradictory to their intentions. Although they made some

attempts at self sufficiency though growing some vegetables at home, these participants continued to purchase most of their food and other goods in supermarkets which as such linked them to the farming practices they declared themselves against. They espoused the importance of solar energy they continued to consume fossil fuels through driving long distances by car because the location of their place was far from shops and workplaces. The participants did not seem to fully recognise the incongruence of attempting to maintain a minimal impact on one place by shifting these impacts to other places, such as the emissions from their car or the farming systems that grew most of their food. Upon further analysis it appeared that whilst on the one hand fetching their own water and firewood linked A9M and A9F1 to their natural systems, they simultaneously conducted many other activities which served to distinguish themselves from the 'pristine' environment they wanted to live in.

A9F2 had a very strong identity with both the natural and social environment of this hot and dry part of the Atherton Tablelands. She also expressed a very strong desire to look after the place. However, unlike A9M or A9F1, A9F2 was not concerned with a 'zero impact' approach to living on the property. She acknowledged from the beginning that they were going to make an impact on the place and that they needed to live their lives in some basic level of comfort:

> A9F2: Well as [A9M] said you know, his idea was pristine you know, we make no impact, tread lightly on the land. This idea I certainly have them too… [but]… when we come here I didn't think that we weren't going to make an imprint. I knew we were.

The practical dimension to A9F2's sense of place was focussed on trying to find a balance between 'treading lightly' and gaining access to infrastructure and services. From the beginning she was in conflict with A9M about the issue of delivering

telephone services to the property. She was aware that installing this infrastructure would have an impact on the property and she asked herself whether this was acceptable to the integrity of the country:

> A9F2: I spent days sitting on the hill thinking, can you accept that? Will you forgive us for this? and I thought oh yeah it's alright like we'll handle this. Look, just look after the place. That was my answer always. And looking after the place, that means very much the rock wallabies because they, they were almost gone when we first came. There were meant to be many here in the past and they've got more populated… we feel like we need to protect those wallabies because they've got nowhere to go. There's dogs everywhere…

5.3 Discussion

In developing the theoretical context for this thesis, it was found that the link between sense of place and activities in practice has been studied very little (Stedman 2002). As such, this discussion has very little existing research with which to draw comparisons. It is nonetheless possible to discuss the themes grounded in the fieldwork conducted for this study, and this is the main focus of this section. For many of the participants in this study the practice of their sense of places was strongly associated with gazing at fields or forests around them, but not engaging with their place very much in a direct sense. Some participants went to special efforts to do this, such as going for picnics or going to a particular location to admire the view. These participants overlapped strongly with those who were influenced by rejecting an urban context and also those who were attempting to re-unite with a rural childhood.

5.3.1 Exclusive focus on production

One of the most interesting themes of the interviews was the practice of making the land produce. For eight of the participants in the study, place was very strongly focussed on

production. The practical elements of place for these people was shaped by a highly defined sense of self that was strongly tied to their ability to produce. Some of these people were unable or unwilling to describe any features of place other than their animals, their infrastructure and their farming inputs. Some described conflicts they were involved in with other parties who asked them to vary their practices according to criteria they rejected. For example participant A3F was in conflict with an NRM agency over access to the creek that ran through her property. This participant was very strongly opposed to 'losing' any part of her farm by turning it into non-productive land.

5.3.2 A question of balance

In contrast to the participants for whom the practical aspects of place were exclusively focused on making the land produce, 15 of the 40 participants interviewed for this study described practical dimensions of place concerned with balancing production with other aspects of place. For these participants, agricultural production was a significant part of their sense of place; however, they were also engaged in a range of further practical dimensions. For these people place was much more than a source of income or a way to feel productive. Place was about participating in the community through sports, clubs and festivals, and exploring nature such as going for walks in the forest or taking the kids for a swim in the local water hole.

5.3.3 A caring minority

A minority of participants emphasised the practice of their sense of place as being focussed on caring for place. For example, participants W2M and A16M were

interested in caring for the long term productivity of his farm as well as the ecological health of the farm. Another example is participant A23M who cared for his tribal country in his capacity as both a ranger and an Indigenous elder. Whilst there were many differences between these participants, there were also some important similarities. In each of these cases, these participants had a deep connection to the land and this connection had a timeframe that was longer than their own lifetimes – they had inherited responsibilities for their place from their elders and intended to pass these on to their children. They also shared a sense that they were a part of their landscape in some way, that the way they lived their lives was very closely linked to their place. To express this in terms of Relph's (1976) approach to place, they were thoroughly 'inside' place.

There were also some participants who had a strong sense of caring for the land, but they didn't think of themselves as part of it. It was interesting that the most conservation focussed participants in this group tended to think of themselves as guardians of place yet distinct from nature. This was complicated further for participants A9F1, A9F2 and A9M for whom there was an apparent incongruence between on the one hand seeking to minimise impacts on a natural environment and on the other attempting to establish a place which is overtly human modified through introducing non native plants and animals and attempting to segregate them in cages. Underlying this human modified focus of place was a network of sub-themes – making the place more familiar through 'lush looking things', making place more comfortable through planting for shade and making land more productive by raising chickens, and

planting bamboo for commercial purposes. In essence what they were trying to do was to live in a place and admire it but to consider themselves separate from it.

Plumwood (2002) has argued that recognising humans as part of nature and embedded within natural relationships is crucial to achieving long term future for humankind. It was interesting that some of those who emphasised the strongest intentions to protect nature actually thought of themselves as inherently different from it. They idealised place as being a natural landscape without humans. Whilst they claimed they wanted to live in harmony with nature, the resisted acknowledging this relationship as reciprocal – where one impacts on the other. Rather, they attempted to separate themselves from the very environment they lived in, symbolised by the example of the caged plants. This motivation created considerable tension within them, but their ideological approach to nature conservation helped them with amazing determination to succeed at their endeavours:

> A9F1: I think one thing we all do though is you know we're constantly faced with these challenges, but we're really determined that there's got to be a way we can live harmoniously with what's here you know we won't give in to something. Like my approach to the garden is I'm determined to find things that they [the wallabies] don't eat…
>
> A9F2: [laugh] yeah well there must be.
>
> A9F1: We're getting there [laugh] they don't eat aloe vera and they don't eat rosemary.
>
> I: Is that why you've got a lot of aloe vera?
>
> A9M: Yeah [chuckle] by default.

If these people did not think of themselves as part of this place then could it be that they didn't have the sort of belonging that is important to place? The relationship between belonging and place will be further considered in section 8.4.3.

5.4 Chapter conclusion

Fundamental to recent interest in the concept of place is the potential for the concept to assist us become more embedded in our environment – to recognise that we are a part of it and that our survival depends upon the way we engage with our environments. For many of the participants in this study, the practical dimension of their sense of place was focussed on admiring their place from the comfort of the veranda rather than physically engaging with it. Amongst these participants there appeared to be a sense of wanting to further acknowledge that they were linked to their place but they were satisfied that that they could maintain this link just by being aware of what was around them, rather than working directly amongst it.

For several participants the practical dimension of place was focussed on extracting something – making it produce food or income or both. For a minority of participants the exclusive emphasis on this production was a sign that they had a very narrow view of their place, a view that was strongly focussed on taking from the place without giving anything back. It was also apparent that some of these people had a very strongly developed sense of their farm and what it provided for them, however, they had a very confrontational approach to other ways people understood that place. This was highlighted by the conflict these people experienced dealing with NRM agencies. Some participants were also confrontational towards their neighbours. For example they were angry about the way surrounding property owners didn't restrict the movement of weeds across the fence. In section 4.3.2 it was shown that for several participants sense of place was shaped by a particular activity – the reason they came to Woodstock or the

Atherton Tablelands. For example W3M came to be a grazier, A3F came to be a dairy farmer and A9M came to be a conservationist. For these participants, the practical dimensions to their place were directly and almost exclusively related to their reason for coming.

By contrast, for several of the participants living out sense of place in practice involved balancing multiple themes. For these participants, being embedded in a particular community was a strong feature of belonging to their place. Several of these participants also described an emphasis on getting out and experiencing place by going camping, hunting or some other activity that emphasised being in their natural environment.

For some participants this was conveyed as also a sign of embeddedness, of being part of a broader outback landscape. By contrast, for others it served as almost the opposite. By making a special effort to go walking for a natural experience, some participants were effectively reinforcing their mental distinction from nature. Nature was treated as something different from the rest of life – a place one goes to for a different experience.

Only a minority of participants showed strong signs of caring for place. Of these, some of them essentially thought of themselves as guardians of the land but not actually part of it. Rather they saw themselves as protecting the land from human activity. Only two participants showed clear signs that they cared very strongly for their place and that the way they lived their lives was dependent upon that place. However, many more participants implied a sense of caring for their place related to other activities, such as

their interest in going camping in the forest, providing opportunities for their children and becoming involved in community events.

Chapter 6 Learning and place

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter is about the learning people conveyed in the interviews. It follows a similar format to chapters four and five in presenting a thematic discussion of the learning that participants described. Whilst keeping with the principle of presenting the analysis in a series of themes, the chapter is divided into two groups of themes. The first of these includes general issues that are relevant to most participants, and relate to themes of chapter four including the importance of learning about places during childhood and learning from family and friends. The second group concerns issues that were particularly related to learning about places during adulthood. These include the importance of continuity and seeing places under different conditions.

6.2 General themes

6.2.1 Learning about places in childhood

One of the main themes to emerge from the analysis on how participants learned about their place was that much of the learning was related to experiences during childhood. This was the case both for people who grew up in the case study locations and those who moved there as adults. For those who grew up in the place of the interview, they learned about the place during childhood and then reinforced or adapted this understanding throughout their adult lives. For those who grew up in another place later

moved to the Atherton Tablelands or Woodstock, learning about places in childhood had a particular relevance because this type of learning occurred somewhere else and was then transposed to the place where the interview took place when they were adults.

W5M described learning about his place whilst growing up with his father and grandfather. From these people he learned a sense of place focussed on chopping trees by hand to supply materials for infrastructure. He further developed this sense of place by learning on the job when he started to work cutting railway sleepers from the age of twelve. He learned that place was focussed on hard work which was rewarded by drinking alcohol and playing sports. Since these earlier days his sense of place had changed very little – he continued to think of place as being focussed on harvesting natural materials for infrastructure. During the interview he said much of the remaining timber in the district was untouchable due to being in 'national parks or World Heritage or something', however, he still thought of it the same way - it was a supply of wood that he would like to get his axe to.

Like A5M, W7M also learned about his place growing up with his father and grandfather who were both prominent farmers in the district. He learned about his place as a young child working hard on the family farm to produce food for the family and the region. In the interview he gave examples of how he further developed his understanding of the farm during adulthood, and these are further discussed in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.3. The essence of what place was all about, however, was learned in his childhood.

A23M learned about his place from growing up in it and listening to the old people around him. He emphasised the significance of walking around Ngadjon country as a child and feeling a part of it.

> I: Could you tell me a bit about how you've come to know the country, how you've learned about it?
>
> A23M: Well you see it comes back you know when, where we grew up you see we didn't grow up in suburbia we grew up in the rainforest and we walked about in the rainforest. We didn't go anywhere else. The rainforest is part of us and we're part of it I mean we class ourselves as rainforest Aborigines…

For A23M, learning about his place during childhood was also strongly linked to listening to his elders. This is further discussed in section 6.2.2.

A17F learned about her place from growing up in the district; however, this didn't really become apparent to her until after she moved away during the war. A17M also learned a great deal from growing up in the district, but he didn't need to go away to realise how much he had learned. Rather he moved away because he was unsatisfied with life on a small isolated farm and he was seeking further opportunities. Throughout their lives both A17M and A17F continued to travel and further developed their sense of place by comparing it with other places around Australia. This is further discussed in section 6.2.3 under the theme of comparisons between places.

A12M and A12F learned about their sense of place through their memories of their childhoods. The version of place they learned about was further developed in response to working during their adult lives in large public organisations which didn't fulfil them. In essence they selected a block of land and modified it to fit a sense of place that already existed. Since they had been there, they made some revisions to their

understanding of the place and these are discussed in 6.2.4 under the theme of learning by doing.

Learning about his place during childhood was also a strong issue for A18M. His sense of the Tablelands as a collection of small conservative towns parallelled his tales of growing up with 'country people' in the United States. Whilst he was living in Cairns he further learned about the quiet conservatism of the Tablelands by visiting this area as a refuge from the urbanisation he witnessed going around him. Similarly, participant A1F developed a sense of place associated with her rural childhood in South Australia. After feeling unfulfilled living in Cairns for several years she also took refuge in the Atherton Tablelands and this helped her recall her experience of place as a child. In direct contrast to A18M, however, the experience of moving to the Tablelands permanently did not recreate her childhood environment. Rather she revised her understanding of place when she found that not everybody was friendly towards her and life was more difficult than she had initially realised.

A5M described learning about his place whilst growing up in his small rural community in the western side of the Tablelands. He emphasised how he learned about the freedom of the bush whilst playing as a child since then he wanted to teach his own children to grow up with the similar ideas of the place. Moving to urban areas such as Brisbane and Cairns for work and study confirmed his notion that there was a naive quality to his place in the Atherton Tablelands that appealed to him. In these urban areas he became aware of phenomena that he didn't see in his rural community such as the stress of traffic and fear associated with crime. The rest of the learning he described in the

interview was not about understanding his place so much as the details of living in the place – technical aspects of farming and ways to limit himself from the difficulties of commodity price decreases. He had learned that to maintain his level of production (and the lifestyle this affords him) he needed to be innovative about the way he conducted his business.

A22M learned about his place by growing up in a small mining town in the western Tablelands and seeing at first hand change that was occurring all around him. He learned about his place by seeing people working hard to transform the bush into farms and mines. Hardship played a considerable role in the way he learned about his place during childhood, particularly seeing people being forced to leave the land. Growing up in a similar timeframe to A22M but on the eastern side of the Tablelands, participant A10M also formed a very strong understanding of place in his childhood. He also developed a very strong sense of place being about transition – changing the dense forests into paddocks for cows and timber for the mill. Growing up in a time of intense change, he developed a strong ability to adapt, and the understanding of place he learned in his childhood facilitated him to embrace change in the forestry industry later in life. The way he dealt with change is discussed further in section 6.4.5.3.

Learning about her place in childhood was also a theme for A19F. Though she arrived in her place as an adult, she had a sense of the Tablelands that she learned in her childhood and throughout her entire life as a dairy farmer. In essence, she came with a generalised sense of place that was focussed on dairy farming. She had a strong sense

of what dairy farms were like - places of hard, dirty work, collapsing infrastructure and hardship, whether located in the Atherton Tablelands or somewhere else.

For A9M the basis for his understanding of place was formed in his childhood. Growing up on the bush property (section 4.2.2) underpinned his focus on caring and preserving his place discussed in section 5.2.6. He learned to admire nature and to protect it from human destruction. As a young adult he studied the ecology of savanna ecosystems, including conducting much of his thesis research within the drier parts of the Atherton Tablelands. When A9M arrived in the place of the interview, he recognised an environment that he had already learned about earlier in life:

> I: I remember earlier on you mentioned... there is a wildness about the country. Can you talk me through how you developed that sense?
>
> A9M: ...it's not something really that developed, it' s more sort of history. Like it's a real grand era of the landscape. Savanna plains…aspects of feeling about it… I feel that it's a real combination of earth and life. I admire it. Yeah it's something that when we first came here that instantly struck me rather than developed.

Whilst most of A9M's learning about the inherent features of his place was developed prior to arriving there, one of the biggest changes for both A9M and A9F1 was the realisation that their ideal of living without making any impacts was unrealistic. This transition took place over a couple of years of living there and involved going through a series of crises. This type of learning is further discussed in section 6.3.3 under the theme of seeing places under different conditions.

W3M developed his own pastoral approach to understanding places growing up in a rural area and volunteering on cattle stations as a young man. He had already developed this sense of place before his family took ownership of the place where he

lived out his pastoral vision. He gave no indication that his understanding of his place had changed since he starting living there on a permanent basis. By contrast, he showed very strong signs of a different type of learning – he was highly engaged in learning more about technical aspects of farming and he indicated that he was constantly exchanging advice with other farmers and making inquiries about agricultural research. He conveyed a sense that he had learned all he wanted to learn about the meaning of his place, and that he was dedicated to learning more about the most effective and efficient ways of living out this sense of place.

6.2.2 Learning from elders, friends

Several of the participants who emphasised learning about their place during childhood overlapped with another category of learning which concerned learning about places from particular people, such as friends, family and elders. This has already arisen in discussing participants such as W5M and W7M whose childhood learning was strongly linked to the instruction they received from their fathers and grandfathers. It was also apparent for participants such as A6M and A23M who emphasised learning from their traditional elders.

For A23M, learning about country was fundamentally linked to listening to his elders. This was difficult for A23M because they were reluctant to teach Aboriginal culture because it was so actively discouraged by government policy.

> A23M: …the government policy of that era maintained that there had do be no teaching of the Aboriginal culture … and so I picked it up just by listening to the old people. They weren't keen about teaching us even though I said to a couple of them you should be teaching us our culture. [They said] no we're not allowed to, just straight out like that.

Though the elders refused to teach him, A23M observed them and listened to their conversations and pieced things together for himself. Since then he reinforced this learning by being in his traditional country whenever he could.

A6M described learning about Barbarrum traditional country from his grandfather. He gave examples of learning about the properties of plants that served as bush tucker and bush medicines. He built on this knowledge by following an Indigenous ranger program which his grandfather had been involved with.

A11F1 partly learned about her place by spending time with some members of an Indigenous culture from whom she learned to look at the area differently. She learned by talking with them and going to visit their families and started to develop a sense of the land as having an energy that she had not been aware of previously. In time she became less involved with this culture and the affinity with the land and people she had got to know became diminished.

Participant A18M learned about his place from talking with members of his church community and in particular the elderly people who could recall pioneering days and whose staunch conservatism appealed to him.

> A18M: You know there's still some of these fellas around that fought their way through the jungle you know when it was all pretty rough. Really interesting characters. I love talking to them.

He spoke particularly of learning about his place by listening to elderly foresters and farmers who cleared the forests by hand to make farms and roads. He also learned from

stories about people who experienced hardship and isolation in the past and survived through perseverance and self reliance.

A20M learned about his place from his father and from the older foresters who taught him the philosophy and the practice of converting forests into paddocks effectively. Motivated by a desire to generate productive land, he learned the techniques of removing timber on gradients by employing a domino principle such that the trees all bowled each other over and ended up in heap at the bottom of the hill that was subsequently burned.

> I: Who taught you that technique?
>
> A20M: Who taught me?
>
> I: Yeah.
>
> A20M: Oh hell me father probably but you know it's a technique that bloody goes way back ever since it's been getting done, oh way before my time, way way back before my time that would have been whenever they first started…
>
> I: OK.

For participant A20M, learning the techniques of felling timber went hand in hand with an understanding of the places he worked in as both 'scrub' and productive land, and his role was to convert one to the other. This was reinforced throughout his working life by being in the 'scrub' and working the farms over many years.

W3F didn't describe much about the way she learned about their cattle property but did mention some indications of how her learning was related to W3M. From him she had learned about their place as essentially concerned with pastoral production and also like him she was dedicated towards efficiency. For this reason she frequently inquired about pastoral research to help them produce more from their place.

W6M learned about his farm and his community from his grandfather who was a prominent settler in the area. From his grandfather he learned a lot about the local history of the place such as how it was an important stop over for travellers between Townsville and Charters Towers during the mining boom of the late 19th Century. He added that he also learned about his place by being in and amongst it, such as whilst droving cattle to Townsville as a young man.

A21F didn't remember much about her home in Italy before she arrived in Australia as a nine year old girl. Since then, she learned about her place from her father who showed her around the farm and told her about the hard work and difficult conditions he experienced when he arrived there. As an adult she also learned about her place by going back to Italy and comparing her lifestyle with the lifestyle of relatives who never left Italy. Like her father, direct experience played a strong role in learning about her place, as she experienced the attitudes of both anglo Australians and other migrants in her district, many of whom she found to be stubborn and offensive. These issues lead to the following theme of learning about places which involves comparisons.

6.2.3 Comparisons between places

The theme of comparisons between places has already arisen in section 6.2.1. For example, by travelling to Brisbane and Cairns, participant A5M came to a personal realisation that there was a naïve quality to his rural community and this character appealed to him. Other participants such as A7M and A2F who came from urban backgrounds were struck by the contrasts they experienced on arrival in their rural

communities. For example, participant A2F was a recent arrival to a rural property near the town of Dimbulah. At the time of the interview she emphasised that she was in a stage of actively learning about her place by comparing it with her former urban life. She described experiences which made a strong impression on her, such as when she walked into a shop and someone remembered her name. Participant A7M described a similar incident when he was at the supermarket and the shop assistant reminded him that the previous week he had left an item behind when he exited the shop. He was amazed that she remembered him, and even more amazed when she gave him the item he had forgotten a week earlier. Underpinning the significance of these experiences for A2F and A7M was a comparison between urban and rural places. In the case of A7M this commenced prior to moving to the Atherton Tablelands and in section 4.2.3 it has been discussed that these comparisons were a strong influence on his reason for relocating. From the point of view of learning about place, these comparisons are significant because they show that for A7M the learning had already begun before he arrived. He moved there with an initially simple understanding that the place was small and friendly. Since he had been there he found complications with his idea of a friendly community, partly because it was more difficult to make friends than he thought, but also because in becoming part of the community he realised that he had lost his anonymity. Yet in other ways his understanding of his place has changed very little since he arrived. He went there with a view towards living in a town where everyone knew each other and where he could go out and experience the forests and the mountains. After a few years of living there, he saw it essentially the same way.

A11F2 came to visit some relatives and ended up discovering a lifestyle that was entirely new to her. Over the period of a year she changed from being a visitor to a resident. Her learning can be described as occurring almost entirely after she arrived. Integral to the way she learned about her place were the comparisons she made with her former life as an urban professional. Unlike other people who learned through urban comparisons, A11F2 actually liked her former urban lifestyle. It was only after living with family in the rural community of Malanda over the period of a year that she found something which appealed to her more.

The main way that A13M learned about the Atherton Tablelands was making frequent visits to the forests of the area and this is discussed in section 6.3.2. He did, however, add that he learned in part by comparing these visits to his experience of the tropical highlands of Uganda. Furthermore, he also made a realisation about his community by moving away temporarily. After his wife died he sold his property and moved away to live in northern New South Wales. Whilst away he found himself missing a sense of community in the Atherton Tablelands that he had not been conscious of in the past. The impact of living without this sense of community was sufficient for him to move back to the Tablelands to reconnect with this aspect of the place.

A14M and A14F mostly described learning about their place by comparing it with other places they had lived and visited. They learned about it through its similarities with the tropical highlands of Cameroon, specially in terms of biophysical dimensions of the place. This was clear by their discussion of the climate and the vegetation of the Atherton Tablelands. They also learned about how the social character of the place was

different (and preferable) to the character of cities they had visited. This was noticeable in their discussion of problems they had experienced with crime and traffic in urban areas.

A15F learned about the Atherton Tablelands in general and the farm that would one day become her place in particular through several years of visiting family and friends and comparing it with her place in suburban Cairns. She also emphasised how she developed a sense of living in rural environments from living on a farm in New Zealand and growing up in rural Wales, and these comparisons also underpinned much of her understanding of the Atherton Tablelands.

Throughout their lives, A17M and A17F travelled all over Australia including periods of living in urban areas. These trips helped A17M and A17F to realise what they liked and disliked about the Atherton Tablelands.

> I: When you came back from these trips or holidays… what did you notice about coming back home which appealed to you? Did that offer any perspective on why you like the Atherton Tablelands, why you think it's the best place to live?
>
> A17M: Well speaking personally I couldn't stand all the noise in the city, and I'm not very much of a people person. I like the quietness of the country life and we think it's better [to look out] on the pastures and trees than to be looking at other people's houses. People live too close to each other [in the city] and they didn't seem to even know their neighbours but they still live very close. We like our own privacy.

Though he grew up on farms, for over ten years participant W3M worked in the city and travelled to his father's property on weekends. These years were important in developing his understanding of his place as a context where he could escape the confines of the city. When he came to live permanently on the farm his sense of it was well developed – a pastoral place where he could live out his life long vision that was

created in his youth and developed through comparing his childhood with living in the city for many years.

A3F's learning about her property was associated with comparing it to sugar cane farms she knew down on the coast. Her reason for coming to the Atherton Tablelands was to find a version of farming that was more profitable than her former farming operation and she was determined to maintain her farm as a profitable and productive enterprise.

Before he arrived in his place A21M had learned only one thing about the place he was moving to: it had to be better than where he was coming from. What he did learn about the place he learned through the experience of being an emigrant seeking to escape adversity in favour of the opportunity to work hard to build a life for himself in a new place. Once he had arrived in the district, he learned about it from working hard in the fields and by how the Anglo-Australians treated him. After this initially difficulty period, the role of comparisons was also important when he returned to his home country to consider the way his compatriots were living.

6.2.4 Learning by doing

This theme concerns learning that is experiential, that is strongly tied to action and observation. This theme overlaps with several of the themes already discussed in this chapter. Most of the people who emphasised learning about their place whilst growing up there emphasised a highly experiential type of learning involving playing in the creeks, following their parents around or working on the farm at a young age. Some of the people who moved to Woodstock or the Atherton Tablelands as adults also

emphasised learning about their places from experiences such as working in the bush or going for horse rides.

It has already been raised that for A23M learning about Ngadjon country from his elders was strongly tied to being in the place and listening to the way his elders spoke about the country. He emphasised that he 'grew up in the rainforest and …walked around it'. As an adult he emphasised that he maintained this link with experiential learning by being in his traditional country as often as possible.

Participants A14M and A14F also emphasised learning through direct experience and observation. This experiential learning was crucial in them coming to develop a deeper understanding of their property and its relationship with the rest of the Tablelands. When it came to examples, they gave incidents, such as learning about the animals on their property from seeing them in the rainforest or listening to them at night. Other examples included working with neighbours in the paddocks to repair farm infrastructure and developing an understanding of the hydrology of the property from observing the creeks after rain. Taken together, the many examples they told conveyed a strong sense of experiential learning. Some of this learning served to enhance the understanding they had brought with them, for example by improving their understanding of the wildlife they shared their place with. Other examples caused them to rethink their sense of place, such as finding that their community was not as friendly as they had expected.

For participant A8F experiential learning was a strong theme as soon as she arrived in the Atherton Tablelands. She explained that on arrival she experienced extended periods of being in the forests as part of her job:

> A8F: I had a big connection with the country first of all … walking around at any time of night or day in any of that rainforest or that country all around Ravenshoe looking for the animals that I was studying. So straight away my first experience was just walking walking walking walking through all the catchment areas and over the all the ridges.

Other examples of learning through direct experience she described included her emphasis on camping out on her own five acre property for the purposes of recreation and to better get to know the wildlife of the area. In addition, she emphasised observing and experiencing change in the character of her community following the collapse of the timber industry. She witnessed a transformation that she considered herself a part of – the formation of a new identity focussed on conservation and community spirit to find new sources of employment after forestry was shut down.

Though most of their learning about their place was concerned with remembering childhood experiences and dreaming of alternatives to unfulfilling jobs, participants A12M and A12F did learn partially from direct experience after arriving in their place. A12F found that their rural place was much less friendly than she had anticipated and this detracted from their experience. They learned that even their small scale approach to farming was much more difficult than they had imagined.

A22M also learned about the western Atherton Tablelands through the direct experience of living in an isolated community and by the hard work of clearing bush by hand. Extended periods of droving cattle through harsh country was another way that A22M experienced learning about his place through direct activity and served to reinforce his

sense of isolation. Later in life A22M compared his own experiences with those of other people in the district though his keen interest in local history.

6.3 Themes associated particularly with adult learning

The following group of themes are concerned particularly with people who described learning about their places during adulthood. Some of these participants had grown up in the case study locations and some of them had moved to the place of the interview during adulthood.

6.3.1 Learning as a lifelong process

A16M conveyed a sense of continually learning about his family farm throughout his life. From as long as he could remember he had been tracking changes to his place over time. He gave several examples of this, including observing changes to tree numbers around the farm. (Since he had been there they had lost an average of two trees per year from lightening strikes, mistletoe and termites). He further learned by comparing his observations with aerial photographs of his property. He developed a strong sense of the carrying capacity of his property through a life long interest in trial and error and by constantly monitoring his herd size and his pasture condition. More recently he had learned more about his property by engaging with conservation groups who were interested in conducting fauna surveys on his land and planting wildlife corridors.

Like A16M, both W2M and W2F described a state of continual observation and reflection. W2M learned a lot about his farming district by looking at the hills and

comparing them with events in previous years, sometimes checking his memory against old photos. In particular, he emphasised comparing the landscape with his memories of bushfires that had affected his property and this will be further discussed in section 6.3.3. He also paid attention to which trees were more susceptible to dying than others. For example, over time he built up an understanding that Morton Bay Ash were the most affected by the 'die back' disease on his property. W2F also described learning from observing the land and reflecting. Like W2M, she had also noticed some changes in the tree populations and was trying to figure out the anomaly. Furthermore, she observed considerable changes in her community with the arrival of many more people who left the city to live on small rural residential blocks in Woodstock.

A4M showed that he was strongly committed to continually learning about his property and the Atherton Tablelands more generally. He explained that as a rural resident he did this partly for personal reasons, but as an investor in agricultural real estate he linked this learning very strongly to his financial prosperity. He explained that he was continuously trying to expand his understanding of the demographics of the community and the ecology of the agricultural systems around him. Interestingly he was the only participant who insisted on being interviewed and used the interview to ask me questions about my own understanding of the Atherton Tablelands. He explained that over the several years that he had lived there he had paid careful attention whilst talking with people in his community and with agricultural research staff to help him build up his understanding of the place.

W4F had a very strong idea of what her place was going to be like before she arrived. Since being in Woodstock, she developed and refined her learning about the place by talking with neighbours and observing the wildlife on her property through observation whilst working in the fields. She also continued to learn about her community by talking to the teachers where her children went to school and by visiting the local shop to collect her mail.

W1M arrived in Woodstock with a strong understanding of what the place was about – researching pastures to make cattle farming more productive for northern Australia. Since he has built on this original understanding by talking with the descendents of the first European settlers in the area about their history of the place, resulting in a deeper understanding of those who came to the area to farm potatoes, tobacco and dairy as well as supplying materials to mining industries. He also learned about the soils and hydrology of the area by talking with these farmers in addition to careful study of the country whilst working in and amongst it. He also learned about living in Woodstock by becoming involved in the Bushman's Carnival which is discussed in section 6.3.4.

W7M explained that throughout his life he had carefully observed all the aspects of his place that affected food production. For example, he had also learned about the flow of water through the creek through constant observation. Much of this learning came from observing his property under extreme weather events such as floods, and this will be further discussed in section 6.3.3. He also carefully observed the way water moved under the surface by digging holes to see where it flowed. In addition, he studied the

movements of pigs and tried to learn more effective ways of stopping them eating his crops.

When participant A9F2 arrived in the Walsh River district she came with strong ideas about the place based upon her experience in the wet parts of the Atherton Tablelands. On arrival in this drier country, all she saw was a dry and dusty place that had no appeal to her. However, over repeated visits, she found the country growing on her.

> A9F2: The first time I ever drove in here I thought oh my God you know it's dry and really dusty and quite harsh looking. I thought how could anyone possibly want to live here? Like there's nothing that would attract you that's what I thought first… then I started noticing the finer details and it somehow became really, it's an emotional issue, became really really attractive to me. It's actually very fragile country I've come to realize you know…

Though she started with a simple and negative understanding of the place, she became open to learning more about it. When asked about the 'finer details' she started to notice, she described learning more about the way water moves through the country, and the flowering events of plants. She further described noticing the ways animals responded to the flowering events of plants.

Participant A9F1 also described her sense of continual learning in terms of the place 'growing on her'. Both A9F1 and A9F2 conveyed the idea that 'listening to place' was crucial to this state of continual learning.

> A9F1: I've spent so many times here just sitting feeding the baby, staring off into the distance. The place seems to grow on you, like you just have a lot of time for reflection and seeing it, …it talking to you…
>
> A9F2: Yeah I have that strongly, a lot. A real lot. It talks to me.

Having time for reflection was a theme that A9F1 returned to several times. An example of the land 'talking to her' concerned learning about access to water through sitting and letting the land 'reveal' itself to her, as discussed in the following section.

6.3.2 The importance of continuity

The discussion of 'life long learning' emphasises the role of continuity of experience as being an important theme of learning about places. Participant A9F1's continual state of learning involved some key components. The first of these was her emphasis on extended or continuous experience – spending long periods of time in her place thinking. In her case, much of this was undertaken whilst caring for her young children.

> A9F1: …in time I've actually grown to love it and when I go away for a little while I come back and I just have this really strong feeling in my heart when I see it, like coming down the range, it's like coming home, beautiful although I think seeing it through the changes of the seasons too.
>
> I: Yes.
>
> A9F1: It really helps being here and I think, spending time here like not just coming here little bits for me it was necessary to actually endure I guess. For me, the hardship of being here l… it has been a real testing. I had a baby here and that's been a real testing time…

She emphasised the importance of long periods of time and a strong level of patience. By this she meant a preparedness to rethink the way she interacted with her place, and being open to the country 'revealing' itself to her.

> A9F1: It's like if you're patient, if you just sit and watch, it will reveal itself to you. Same as the water thing, me thinking oh there's no water. There's heaps of water here …

This continuation of experience was linked to a deep level of learning that combined extended observation and reflection, leading in this case to an overall preparedness for A9F1 to rethink her pre-existing ideas.

A13M emphasised that the way he learned about the forests around his property was through continuity of connection to these areas. In the interview it became apparent that for him the key to developing a deep familiarity with his place was not so much extended periods of time but repeated visits.

> A13M: I love the forests. There are various places I frequently go to and even if very short, the experience of just being tucked away in a bit real forest I like that very much …and I do think you notice the variety more and more the better you get to know it. What initially is just a mass of trees, then you see the different characters of the different trees…
>
> I: Frequency of visitation, is that an issue?
>
> A13M: …yes it is, in developing the recognition yes … I …mainly go back to places I already know and it's a re-recognition. That's always a buzz you know for me … when there is this recognition and I know something. I do enjoy that yeah….

There were other components in developing this appreciation, such as the formal education he had received in botany, and comparisons he made with the tropical highlands of Uganda. However, he emphasised that the strongest element of learning for him was being there on a regular basis to admire and learn about the forests around him.

6.3.3 Seeing places under different conditions

One of the ways that people developed their learning about places was through seeing them under different conditions. Three participants described this as a stimulus for learning more about their place. For A9F1, related to the importance of a continual interaction with her place was an emphasis on seeing the country under difficult seasonal conditions.

> I: What about adapting to this country? One thing which struck me which you said before was seeing it go through the seasons.
>
> A9F1: Yes.

> I: Can you tell me a bit about that?
>
> A9F1: It's like, you know like, when things flower. Maybe it's when you go through the hardship of the dry season it's a real, you appreciate the change of it. This place is amazing for the smell. Like in around November we have these native gardenias that come into flower and the air is full of this heavy scent…

Experiencing her place under different conditions was a major way A9F1 learned about it but she found this difficult to express verbally. Because the experience was deeply sensual, the only way she could convey this learning was to recount the experience of sensing her place differently- giving examples of the sights and smells she had observed.

W7M also emphasised learning about his place by observing the farm under different conditions. It has already been described how much of his learning came from careful observation of the way water moved around his farm (section 6.3.1). In recounting this learning he explained how he once experienced a flood that profoundly affected him and his sense of place. The experience he described was traumatic because he lost most of his crops. Yet he also emphasised that he learned a lot about his property by watching the movement of the large volumes of water. For example he witnessed what happened to his creek banks and observed which fields survived the flood. Though the event was deeply stressful and he lost valuable crops, he also learned more about his property and how to limit his potential damage from future floods.

In addition to describing careful observation on a daily basis, W2M also described learning about his country through fire events. Some of this learning was associated with studying the movement of bushfires and some was by conducting his own controlled burning regimes. In the process of these he described understanding more

about the gradients of his country and the way wind affected his place. Furthermore, he described how burning affected wildlife and gave examples of how he had adapted his burning regimes after observing ground dwelling animals that were highly vulnerable to most burning regimes. This learning helped him understand bushfires and evaluate other people's burning regimes such as the burning instigated by land management agencies in the range surrounding his farm.

A variation on this theme involved A9F1 and A9M being threatened by a snake crisis. Participants A9F1 and A9M learned that their initial ideals about not interfering with nature were overly simplistic. Initially their policy was to let nature into their home unhindered because they considered that wildlife had equal rights to the place as themselves. Within a short period of time they had a plague of rats inhabiting their house and this caused them concerns for the health of the children. The real crisis came when the rats encouraged a population of brown snakes to move into the house as well, and at this point these participants learned that if they wanted to continue to live in this place they would have to rethink their ideological positions regarding killing animals with poison.

> A9F1: …because the rats bred up next thing we've got brown snakes moving into the house, and then that was the next thing to deal with. You know you realize the realities. Finally we did use bait to kill them. We tried everything else and I would never, living in the city I would be the first person to say of someone living in the bush 'how dare they poison' you know, don't they realize what they're doing? But…it's different, you're not up against that same plague proportions of things. I was a completely squeamish person before coming here but I can proudly say that have scraped rotting rat off the grill of the wood stove, something I would never ever have done in my life before.

Participants A9F1 and A9M described this crisis as being a major event in learning about their place and about themselves. It led them to rethink their very reasons for being there, and to find a way to adapt the way they interacted with their place in order

to survive. It was one of the key experiences that led them to realise that they could never fully achieve their goal of living in an environment without making an impact upon it. They since realised that they did impact upon the ecology of the area regardless of their intentions. Since this experience they moved towards accepting but minimising their impact on their environment.

Another variation on this theme involved an imposed change in political conditions. A particular event also influenced A20M in the form of the declaration of World Heritage over much of the Atherton Tablelands forests. This effectively shut down he industry that defined A20M's sense of self and sense of place. Since that time he continued to clear privately owned land and felt better about it when he also managed to clear introduced weed species in the process such as lantana. Whilst he hadn't embraced the culture of nature conservation he nonetheless commenced a process of adapting his sense of place to change with the times. After many years of reflecting upon the change imposed upon him, he indicated that he saw value in replanting trees and looking after the creeks.

6.3.4 Community events

A7M first found it difficult to adapt to living in a small town. One of the ways A7M developed a familiarity with the place was through the Atherton Maize Festival. It became clear that this way of learning about places was very strongly associated with developing a sense of belonging to communities and to places.

I: Can you talk to me a little bit about sense of community in the Tablelands?

A7M: I think that it's important because people have got to feel as though the place they live in is happening, is a good place in the world… like the maize festival.

I: The Maize festival?

A7M: Yeah, well you know how the major crop around here used to be maize?

I: Yeah?

A7M Every year they have a maize festival where they crown a maize queen and have a street procession with different business putting in floats and have little contests… like de-husking of the corn.

I: Yeah.

A7M: …the whole community gets involved. So I think yeah there is a sense of community here. The people want to feel that …they're living in a good place in the world, and this is why we're living here and there's good people around and there's good people.

Attending the Atherton Maize Festival helped participant A7M meet people and feel part of the community, by sharing the special meanings associated with Atherton that are associated with the festival. As such, the festival represented a step towards making the transition towards belonging to the place. By attending the festival in subsequent years, he found that this sense of belonging was deepening.

Participant W1M provided another example of this phenomenon. Since he arrived in Woodstock, W1M developed a deeper understanding of his community through an event known as the Woodstock Bushman's Carnival. This event involved races and competitions such as bull riding and was a regular occasion for people to get together and compare experiences. At one level, the carnival promoted the development of personal skill in activities associated with his community, such as animal handling. At another level the festival fostered a sense of belonging by bringing together people with common interests and by providing charity funding to the local school. W1M became increasingly involved in the carnival and in later years he became one of the organisers. This greatly assisted his sense of belonging to the community.

A further example existed in the form of A9F1's involvement in designing community workshops for children in the Walsh River district. Whilst the activities were specifically focussed on providing learning opportunities for children she explained that by being involved in the design of the activities, she found she was interacting with other people on the topic of what constituted appropriate learning for children of their community. She described this as a creative process, an experience of learning what it meant to live in her place.

6.3.5 Learning from external sources

For many participants, reading local newspapers and other written material played a role in developing an understanding of their place, particularly in terms of providing a context in which to situate their own experiences. In addition, a minority of participants emphasised that this type of learning was a major influence on how they understood their place. For example, participant A2M emphasised that the way he learned about his community was strongly developed by his study of historical documents, some of which he showed me during the interview. In a similar way, it has already been mentioned in section 6.2.4 that A22M learned about his sense of place by comparing it with the stories of local history. Participants A17M and A17F have also both learned very much about their sense of the Atherton Tablelands by being involved in a local history society. Through this society they broadened their understanding of their place by reading the stories of different people they may not have otherwise known. Participant A4M learned about changes to the demographic profiles and agricultural systems of the Atherton Tablelands by reading literature produced by local government

and state planning agencies. He compared the farming systems of the Atherton Tablelands with changes he read about in industry journals from other countries.

6.4 Discussion

6.4.1 The importance of childhood learning about places

The importance of learning about how to interact with places during childhood was a major theme of this work. In comparing these findings with literature on environmental psychology it became clear that environmental psychologists have paid considerable attention to how children learn about their environment. However, it was found that psychologists have a tendency to focus mostly on such issues as cognitive mapping and children's wayfinding (Malinowski and Thurber 1996). What has lacked from these studies is the attitudes and feelings that children develop towards their environment. The learning that people described in this study would suggest that, whilst developing the technical aspects of wayfinding and mapping, children were simultaneously bonding very strongly with their environments, and these bonds strongly influenced their sense of place during adulthood. This is consistent with the notion of 'primal landscape' described by Gayton (1996) who writes about a special bond that develops between children and the natural surroundings they grew up in. He suggests that the sights, smells and sounds of childhood stay with us for life because they become part of our identity. Hoffman captures a similar theme in Lost in Translation:

> …the country of my childhood lives within me with a primacy that is a form of love... It has fed me language, perceptions, sounds, the human kind. It has given me the colors and the furrows of reality, my first loves, the

> absoluteness of those loves can never be recaptured: no geometry of the landscape, no haze in the air, will live in us as intensely as the landscapes that we saw as the first, and to which we gave ourselves wholly, without reservations (Hoffman 1989, p. 17).

The findings of this thesis are consistent with another theme of environmental psychology that is concerned with linking nature experiences in childhood with environmental preferences and behaviour during adult life (Bixler et al. 2002). This thesis shows how the bonds people form early in childhood not only affect their sense of place during adulthood but also their behaviour in their places later in life. These findings have significant implications for the role of environmental education as a means of influencing sense of place during childhood and will be further discussed in section 7.1.

6.4.2 The importance of comparisons

Learning through comparisons is another important way that people learn about their places. The interviews suggested that there are different ways that comparisons are important to their learning. In some cases, participants found comparisons important to help them confirm or identify something they had already learned, such as when participants A5M and A17F moved away from place to visit urban areas. In these cases the participants had learned about their places whilst growing up there, and the comparisons served to acknowledge prior learning or make it more concrete. By contrast, for other participants, such as A7M, A14F and A14M, the learning was essentially developed before they arrived – based upon comparisons with what they expected to find on arrival. These participants moved to their property next to Mount

Bartle Frere as adults and the learning they had conducted through these comparisons was integral to their reason for moving there.

6.4.3 Resistance to seeing a place differently

From the analysis of the interviews, it seems that some participants who formed a solid understanding of a place early in life changed or altered this understanding very little from then on. Several of these participants had a very strong sense of place as being associated with agricultural production. Others were people who came to the farms and towns of the Atherton Tablelands and Woodstock looking to re-connect with rural childhoods. These participants seemed to develop a certain understanding of their places that suited them and then they resisted learning much more about it. When they did learn more, the type of learning they described was centred on consolidating their pre-existing understanding of these places rather than radical rethinking them. An example of this was participant A19F. She moved to her dairy property with a strong idea of what this place was about based upon growing up on a dairy farm and subsequently working on a dairy farm in southern Queensland. Her reason for coming to the Atherton Tablelands was that she had been forced out of the dairy industry in southern Queensland due to being unprofitable in a time of structural adjustment. The ideas she brought to her place strongly influenced her further experience of the place and her subsequent learning. Since moving to her place, her pre-developed sense of dairy farms as places of hard and dirty work and struggling to repair dilapidated infrastructure was reinforced by several years of similar experience. After a further 13 years of hardship

followed by being forced out of the industry for a second time, she continued to assert her identity as a farmer.

> I: In your own opinion, what types of experiences have influenced the way you view the Tablelands?
>
> A19F: I would say the way you earn your living…because [after leaving the industry] … we went looking for a place to buy. I was still looking at farms or farm type things. Even if it was a small farm I was still looking at farms so I was still viewing as a farmer wasn't I?
>
> I: Will you always have that?
>
> A19F: I think so, I don't think I'll ever…[change] … because I've lived on a farm all my life… it doesn't matter what I do, if I become a cleaning lady I don't think I'll ever change…

This participant showed a strong sense of loss and this was a powerful influence on her. After being forced out of the dairy industry as a result of dairy price de-regulation, she described a sense of resisting abandoning the farm, but ultimately resigning herself to 'walking out'.

> A19F: A month ago we ceased dairying forever…the decision was made and that's the way it is …we'll have to fight it but… we thought right well, that's it. So we sold our cattle, everything and walked out. But then again other people have had terrible things happen to them and they've had to sell everything and walk out too haven't they…

A19F attempted to make herself feel reconciled by positioning her own experience in the broader context of other people who had been forced out of their industry, and expressed relief that they could settle their debts when they quit.

Another example of someone who seemed to resist learning and had a sense of self that was strongly focussed on her ability to produce was participant A3F. Like A19F and W3M, she described learning about technical aspects of farming such as fertilizer applications, but no sign of adult learning concerning the meaning or significance of her place. She showed strong signs of resisting learning about her place when she described how NRM agencies wanted her to change the way she managed the farm. She

conveyed a sense of rejecting ideas without considering them. For example, she strongly rejected the principle of keeping cattle out of riparian zones. She strongly disputed the idea that this had any effect other than taking away her productive land. She believed that keeping the cattle in these areas to be a better approach to conservation because grazing inhibits the growth of weeds and pastures prevent erosion.

This theme of resisting learning about place also seemed to apply for participant W5M who essentially learned about his place growing up with his family. He learned about his place in a way which was rigidly defined and he had no reason or no interest in rethinking it. When he was later told that some of the trees in his district were protected for the purposes of conservation, he simply rejected the idea and was frustrated that he couldn't get his axe to those trees.

6.4.4 Life long learning and motivation

In considering adult learning theory, one of the fundamental issues is motivation. Learning theorists have found a direct relationship between successful learning about a topic and motivation to learn about that topic (Knowles, Holton and Swanson 1998; Kolb et al. 1995). One of the findings of this research is that only nine of the 40 participants in the study expressed much motivation to learn about their place in adulthood. Many participants described other types of learning throughout adulthood, but not learning about their places. Rather they described learning how to live out their sense of place – such as learning how to improve the genetics of their herd or more effective ways to deliver mangos to the market place. For example, it has already been

discussed in sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.3 how W3M's learning about his place was developed during his childhood and the years he spent working in the city. As an adult he was strongly motivated to learn, but this learning was focussed on being an efficient and productive farmer. As such it was not directed towards developing his sense of place. Rather he was keen to live out his sense of place that he had developed in his childhood. This lack of adult learning about sense of place confirms the importance of the childhood years as fundamental to understanding places. It also means that if there were some particular characteristics that these nine participants share then that could be important to help explain their interest in life long learning. However, there is very little that distinguishes these participants based on the analysis of the interview material. Three of these participants continue to live in the place where they grew up and have long term attachments to these places which they inherited from the families. The other participants moved to their places in the Atherton Tablelands and Woodstock during adult life for a variety of reasons – including overcoming personal trauma, a desire to protect nature, seeking profit and contributing to agricultural research. The analysis did however reveal some insights about the circumstances in which adult learning can occur about places. One aspect that was raised by some of these participants was the issue of continuity in attachment to a place. For one of these participants this involved extended periods of looking at her place whilst nursing her young child. For another it involved repeated visits to the same area of forest which had special importance for him. Another theme which was raised by some of these participants involved seeing their places under different conditions. These issues will be returned to in sections 7.3.1 and 8.2.3.

6.4.5 Understanding change

6.4.5.1 Seeing change in society

When it came to discussing change in place over time, most participants described considerable change that they could see in society around them. Several participants described considerable demographic change, such as an increase in retired people coming to the area. Other participants identified changes in the character of new residents when the forestry industries were closed down, and people seeking an alternative lifestyle were attracted to these areas for their access to rainforest and low costs of living. Many participants described changes to the agricultural industries in their area. For example, participants who were involved with the dairy industry or who lived near Malanda and Millaa spoke considerably about change in the dairy industry associated with de-regulation of milk prices. Participants living near Mareeba and Dimbulah described the impacts of de-regulation of the tobacco industry on their communities, resulting in considerable hardship for many people.

Participants could see relationships between different types of changes, such as the way changing demography have led to changes in the land uses of the area. For example, several participants observed that increases in vegetation cover surrounding their properties. One of these explained this by linking it to the rise of non-productive land use, such as the arrival of retirees from other places who are attracted by the vegetation of the Atherton Tablelands and like the idea of planting their own private rainforests on their properties.

> A13M: …well the big shift I think has been people coming, there's been lots of rural subdivision and so lots of rural residential areas and this has certainly changed the look of the country particularly around Malanda. The number of trees that have been planted here since I've been here must run into the tens if not hundreds of thousands…

Other participants explained the increase in vegetation cover by the rise of tree planting programs since the rise of conservation. Some of these participants had participated in these programs directly.

Another change that people could see in society around them was a movement to return land to Indigenous people. For example, participant A5M, a non-indigenous farmer who lived near Barbarrum country could see land in his district being returned to Indigenous people and he was resentful that these people should get the land 'for nothing' yet white people had to work the land and make it pay for itself.

In describing the change in society that people saw around them, much of it was attributed to broadly defined forces such as 'the government', 'de-regulation' or 'conservation'.

> A16M: …from 1985 this environmental thing got going.
>
> I: What do you mean by the environmental thing?
>
> A16M: Well you know when …World Heritage closed down the rainforest timber industry…

Being defined so broadly, the agents of change that people described were characterised as somehow inhuman. Even terms such as 'World Heritage' was not used to represent the aspirations of real people interested in ecological health, it was a plot created by unnamed others to stifle people's livelihoods.

> A20M: …if it's up here they want it shut down … see World Heritage is dribbling into everything where there's money.

> I: Where there's money?
>
> A20M: Where there's money… we had a thriving tobacco industry, we had a thriving dairy industry we had a thriving timber industry, mining. It's all just about gone. The whole lot of them are not worth bloody two bob… but 20 years ago … you could see trucks and tractors and logs and bloody everything going backwards and forwards on that road… today… you'd be lucky if you see one tractor of wood go past you now…

These nameless, vague and external responses represent the other side of the coin to belonging. In saying that 'they' wanted to shut down industries, A20M was drawing a strong distinction between insiders (us) and outsiders (them).

Another interesting theme to the changes that people saw in society around them was that they had difficulty identifying individuals who were affected by this perceived societal change. Though she was not directly involved in the dairy industry, participant A11F1 was convinced that deregulation had a very strong negative affect on the people of Malanda.

> A11F1: The de-regulation thing and the forestry thing. That was really big…there were a lot of people who worked the mills, a lot of them, and there's none now because they're aren't any.
>
> I: What happened to them?
>
> A11F1: I don't know.
>
> A11F2: Well the mills closed.
>
> A11F1: Oh the mills…what happened to the mills you mean?
>
> I: No actually I meant the people.
>
> A11F1: Yeah I don't know what happened to the people.

Although she identified dairy deregulation as a major societal change in her town of Malanda, she found it very difficult to identify who was affected by this change and how. One person who went some way to responding to this line of inquiry was participant A5M who lived in the tobacco growing district around Dimbulah and witnessed the effect of removing government quotas for the tobacco industry. After he

emphasised the stress this placed on the industry I asked him how this affected the people of the town.

> I: What about the human impact of that, how did it affect the people? Say for example your family or your neighbours or some of the people you know?
>
> A5M: Well a lot of the people around here went straight from tobacco… [into tea tree farming] because of the government help, buy outs and all those sorts of schemes … and tea tree was a big boom for about two years and it's crashed too because of the world market…

Whilst A5M didn't talk about any individual people he did talk about the way some people responded. Yet rather than describe these responses in depth, he returned to the theme of change being the result of external agents, such as 'the government' and 'the world market'.

6.4.5.2 Seeing change in oneself

Whilst all participants could describe change in society around them to varying degrees, very few participants could acknowledge and describe change that occurred within themselves. In section 6.4.5.1 it was shown that many people witnessed demographic change around them. Only one participant identified herself as part of the demographic change that she described seeing around her.

> A8F A lot of people have come up here for the rural lifestyle. I'd say that's the other big change and I must have been part of that change too. I stayed here. I came up to work on the Tully Millstream dam when it was going to go ahead …and ended up getting pregnant and just staying in Ravenshoe. I guess then I started to notice younger people perhaps like me coming into the area and living there…

Many of the people who described seeing changes in the demography of the area didn't mention that they themselves were examples of the very changes that they were describing. It was not clear from the interviews why this was – whether for example people were reluctant to see themselves as part of broader societal trends or if they

simply didn't recognise themselves as such. It was only clear that when asked about change within themselves, most people had very little to say.

One person who described change within herself was participant A11F2. Over the period of a year she experienced the change of being someone who was a visitor to declaring the Atherton Tablelands her home. The change was completely unexpected for her, and she described actively resisting this transformation. Along the way, she described continuously postponing her departure and progressively tying herself to the place through material possessions, including a horse and a car.

> A11F2: …then we spent quite a lot of time just sort of hanging out and we'd go for horse rides and that kind of stuff.
>
> I: Horse rides?
>
> A11F2: Yeah horse riding and so then I thought oh well maybe I should get a horse you know so I ended up getting a horse you know and then it was like oh shit well I've got to drive to feed this bliming horse so I'd better get a car. So then I got a car and before I knew it I'd spent all my money. So I thought I'm not going to the U.K. …and like it became a place where I was actually living not a place that I was staying and I was battling with it...I've got a horse and a car but I'm really quite poor and … I want a house now [laugh] and I want a house here you know where I'm happiest. I've never been so happy in my life you know being close to family and that kind of thing which is something I haven't experienced to the same intensity until now.

The way A11F2 described change was such that it seemed to unfold of its own accord, a series of realisations that occurred whilst she was 'battling' it. Yet implicit in her description is also a sense of giving in to change. Although this lifestyle was very new and foreign to her, she accepted that it was where she felt happy, to the point that she wanted to commit herself to this place by buying a house and establishing her home there.

6.4.5.3 Responding to change

The responses to change that people discussed during the interviews fell into three broad areas. The first of these was non-comprehension. Associated with this non-comprehension was a rejection – something that people didn't like and didn't want to understand. A minority of interviews expressed this response to change. One example was participant A10M who didn't understand why the Tablelands was being taken over by tourists and he didn't like it. Participant A18M declared that in general he rejected change and was attracted to the Atherton Tablelands because he thought the people thought like him. From a conservative rural background, A18M was strongly disturbed by the changes he saw when he lived in Cairns and witnessed a country town turn into a city. For A18M, the Atherton Tablelands were a place of refuge from change he didn't like or understand.

> A18M: …in a lot of ways I think the Tablelands represents or has represented in years gone by a lifestyle that's not commonly found any more. It's the old stick in the mud, we always did it this way attitude and sometimes in some places we've lived change has been happening so fast that it makes you dizzy. It's good to back off from there and find some place that just don't change very much and it really is an old fashioned town. I think there's a lot of these around Australia I mean you get into the little communities hanging on for dear life and they don't want to change for fear that it'll destroy the community … we lived in Cairns from 1979 to 1991 and it went from 35,000 to a 100,000 people in that much time. The changes were so quick with tourism when everything was happening that… the old timers all said we're leaving… they couldn't handle it… when we went there it was sugar and fishing… very little tourism… and before we'd been there very long the fishing was dying down and sugar selling up to housing developers and tourism coming in like crazy and the international airport and casino and everything like that … so comparing with other places… we like it [here] because it's a friendly… small town atmosphere. You know everybody - you walk down the street and you know everybody you bump into. It takes two hours to get two blocks … you keep dropping in and talking to people… and you couldn't do that in Cairns. You'd never run into anybody you knew…

Included in this strong sense of community was A18M's respect for a particular character to the rural identity centred on a sense of stubborn determination and self reliance.

The second category of change involved embracing and benefiting from change. As with the first category of response, very few people described responding to change this way. An example was participant A16M who took advantage of the rise of conservation following the declaration of World Heritage by inviting tree-planting groups to revegetate parts of his farm. Another example was participant A5M's response to tourism.

> A5M: There's a definite swing towards tourism I mean we've become multi cultural. We're becoming so multicultural that we just have to change… I think tourism's good but we're going the wrong way about it. Tourists don't want to see big … flash things. I think we need to look at the simpler things. A lot of tourists would be quite happy to come on the farm here and have a bit of a drive around [and] have a look [at] … mango trees…

The final category of responding to change involved accepting change and getting on with life. These responses involved people who didn't necessarily like or dislike change, rather they emphasised how they adapted and got on with their lives. For example participant A20M didn't want to leave the forestry industry but he knew its closure was inevitable so he moved first into contract clearing work on private land and later planting trees:

> A20M: Today we've gone the reverse… they want to see the bloody trees grow and the birds flying around I love me birds and … see as you get older that changes too… I don't mind planting a few trees and feeding my birds out here…

It is important to emphasise that these three broad categories of responses varied not only between participants, but between the issues they were discussing. There were examples where participants described quite different responses to different types of change. For example, whilst A5M was thinking of ways to accept and embrace tourism, he rejected the change of returning land to Aboriginal people:

> A5M: The Government's given a lot of land back to the Aboriginal people … I find it hard to get on with because, not that I'm racist or anything but I can't justify them getting all the

> land just given to them…. I'm just wondering what they're going to do with it. Not that we're doing anything with it anyway.

Another example of this phenomenon is participant A10M who experienced radical change in his life, some of which he embraced and some of which he rejected and couldn't understand. His sense of self was focused on making unproductive land productive. Throughout most of his life this was well suited to society's perceived need to clear land for timber and farming country. During this time, he prided himself on his ability to adapt to changes in industries and his ability to learn on the job, in spite of his lack of formal education. Over several decades he embraced the changes towards mechanisation in the timber industry and the consolidation of smaller operators to larger companies. Underlying this period of intense change was a common theme that was consistent with his sense of self and sense of place. However, when elements of broader society brought about a change in values and a change in practice from clearing to conservation, A10M rejected this change entirely. Having worked in the forest all his life he was convinced that there were plenty more trees to cut and that doing so encouraged new ones to grow and take their place. At the same time, he became aware of a series of other changes in the district that were equally foreign to him, such as the rise of tourists who travelled through the district - seemingly without leaving their cars, and a realisation that he used to know many people in the district but at the time of the interview he knew very few people in his community. His response to this change was rejection. He couldn't rationalise these changes and he divided his life into two phases – the period that made sense, and the period that didn't.

> A10M: There never used to be no cars, just mud. Now they're passing all the time. It's all changed…it just happened…the government is doing this, that's the way the country is. It's a new world. It's not the world I was raised in…you'll never understand my world mate… When we lived in Yungaburra we used to know everybody. Now we know nobody…

This response includes two themes. First, he sought to blame this change on someone or something and most of this fell to the governments that created the policies that characterised this change. He also attributed some of this blame to other timber contractors whose way of harvesting timber seemed reckless to him. The second theme focuses on living in the past. Rather than engage with the present, he preferred to recall the past. He felt wronged by change and preferred to remember when he was valued for who he was.

6.5 Chapter conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated the significant influence of learning about places in childhood. Many participants described little or no further learning about their place after childhood, emphasising that their motivations for learning were in different areas. Another important conclusion is that several people's learning about their place occurred prior to arrival, based on ideas that they developed elsewhere. In the context of how people learn about places, this chapter has discussed how people understand and respond to change. The themes discussed in this chapter have significant implications for NRM policy. These implications will be discussed in chapter seven.

Chapter 7 So what?

The introduction to this thesis raised three principal questions as an agenda for research on place to be addressed through the case studies discussed in this thesis. The first of these questions was focussed on the key underlying influences on how people come to understand their place, and has been addressed in chapter four. The second question concerned the relationship between these influences and people's behaviour in practice, and this question has been the subject of chapter five. These analyses have been further discussed in chapter six which focused on how people learn about places and respond to change. The focus of the current chapter is to consider what the implications of these findings are for applied natural resource management in Woodstock, the Atherton Tablelands and more broadly within Australia.

7.1 Environmental education

One of the main findings of this work is that the way people view and understand places is strongly influenced in childhood. This clearly indicates the importance of environmental education during this period. If natural resource policy seeks to influence the way people interact with their environment then it makes sense to attempt to do so at a stage when people are forming the basis for these interactions. The significance of childhood years in shaping the way people develop a sense of place emerged through the inductive analysis of interview data. Where possible, this analysis aimed to specify the age range which seemed most formative in developing a sense of place. The ages that participants described were mostly pre-teenage years from

approximately seven to twelve, and this will be further considered in the following chapter.

The importance of environmental education has been raised by Johnston (2000) who has argued that studying environmental history in schools has strong potential to help children learn to interpret their natural environment. In particular, studying local environmental history can assist people to recognise the impacts of former land uses around them and learn to avoid similar mistakes in the future. This doctoral research confirms Johnston's emphasis on environmental education that is locally relevant. Participants who had studied the history of land use in the local area during their childhood had been strongly influenced by doing so and it underpinned much of their understanding of their local environment. These people indicated that this learning was made relevant for them because they could relate it to their immediate surroundings. To assist such learning, local environmental education would benefit from taking children into the places around them directly.

Reporting on a sense of place learning project in the Sonora watershed (north-western Mexico and south-western USA), Davidson-Hunt and Berkes (2003) emphasised that a major challenge to learning about places has been the breakdown in inter-generational practical learning. This is due to children's instructional time being dedicated to school based learning. For this reason, their learning project focussed on linking practical learning about places and intergenerational communication within a schooling context. Davidson-Hunt and Berkes (2003) argued that for people whose livelihoods are no longer closely connected to the land, creating learning contexts to reconnect them to the

land was an important part of highlighting the links between social and ecological systems.

It is argued in this thesis that practical, localised environmental education during childhood could assist young people to develop ecological principles that they would carry with them even if they move to other environments after childhood. The research conducted for this thesis confirms the role of key family members such as parents and grandparents in influencing the way children learn about places. This finding suggests that increasing parents' involvement in environmental education could have a strongly positive affect on influencing learning about places. For example, encouraging the involvement of such people in school excursions could play a role in making environmental education locally relevant and easily visible so as to be meaningful to the children concerned. In this regard, some of the principles from the emerging area of 'community indicators' of sustainability have relevance here, such as using local environmental monitoring to develop community understanding of sustainability (Gasteyer and Flora 2000). Whilst involving family members could have a strongly positive effect on environmental education, it is also important to acknowledge that the opposite is also possible. Attempting to involve parents in environmental education which they don't agree with could have a strongly negative effect on children's involvement in such programs.

7.2 Main influences occur prior to arrival

The findings of this research suggest that people who move to the Atherton Tablelands and Woodstock developed a well formed understanding of these places prior to arrival.

If this represents a more general finding of the way Australians conceptualise environments before they see them, then this has significant implications for policies aimed at influencing people's sense of place. This trend was particularly strong for people who sought to conduct a specific activity in place, as was the case with some dairy farmers, graziers and conservationists interviewed for this thesis. From a policy point of view, this suggests that encouraging people to adopt natural resource management principles would be more effectively pursued prior to people establishing themselves in a new place, for example through conditions of land titles. At the very least, it would be more effective to make people aware of NRM policies and programs prior to arrival or immediately after arrival.

7.3 Learning that does occur during adulthood

Because most learning about places is developed prior to arrival, this signifies the importance of further research on the nature of learning that occurs following arrival in a new place, and under what conditions it occurs. This thesis provides insight into two areas of learning that occurred after people had arrived in the case study regions. These were seeing places under different conditions and learning through community events, such as field days and festivals.

7.3.1 Learning from extreme events

Within this research participants described seeing places under different conditions as triggering further learning about places during adulthood. The instances included the sorts of extreme events that affect many Australians, such as fire and flood. The impact

of these seemed to work in two principal ways. The first of these occurred during the event itself – such as observing where flood waters went or how fires moved over a hill. The second way this triggered people to learn about places was by altering or removing features of places that people had previously taken for granted. For example, having the grass removed from a paddock through fire revealed features people hadn't noticed because they were obscured by the grass. Natural hazards such as floods and bushfires can cause widespread trauma, as seen in the bush fires that destroyed hundreds of houses in suburban Canberra in January 2003. However, if treated appropriately, such events may also serve as opportunities to learn more about our environments and how we interact with them.

Whilst the bushfires such as those in Canberra cause loss of life, trauma and disruption, they also prompt people to seek understanding – questions like why did this happen, and how? For example, within three months of the January 2003 fires in Canberra a volume of narratives was published addressing the question of how to make sense of the firestorm that as one person expressed 'roared out of the forests into our suburbs' (Maher in Mathews 2003, p. 7). Many of the narratives are focused on expressing personal trauma; however, the volume also shows how the fires triggered a need to learn more about the way we interact with our environments, and how we can avoid the impacts of such fires in the future (Mathews 2003). Learning from natural disasters can not be engineered, however, the events themselves can be a powerful impetus to learn about the places we live in, and why we can't take them for granted. In this regard, learning from natural disasters can be considered a parallel to the learning from 'surprises' in adaptive resource management. Representing the 'gaps between

expectation and perceived reality, surprises offer great potential for adaptation towards sustainability (Holling, et al. 1998). Studying the impacts of tropical cyclones is one area where learning from natural disasters has made some progress. In many parts of the tropics people have found ways to reduce the impacts of these events in terms of human life and local economies through such activities as better preparation (Colding, Elmqvist and Olsson 2003; Cottrell 2002.)

7.3.2 Festivals and community events

Another important way that people developed or changed their sense of place once they had arrived involved participation in community events such as the Atherton Maize Festival and the Woodstock Bushman's Carnival. From the interviews where this theme was raised, it appeared that community events provided a stimulus for people to celebrate being in place. Furthermore they supported people to step outside of their daily reality and be prepared to consider their environment, their community and themselves differently. Participants emphasised the importance of these events in developing a sense of community and a sense of belonging.

The importance of festivals and community events is consistent with the experiences of other research and management programs around Australia which have found that promoting community participation through festivals and artistic exhibitions is fundamental to both sustaining and celebrating natural and cultural resources. For example, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission realised that achieving sustainable resource use involved engaging as many individuals as possible through their

community education program. In commenting on the Commisssion's *Reading the Land Workshop* in 1997 the president of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission expressed that "we must adopt different communication approaches, take a much broader and longer-term view and involve many more people than was thought necessary in the past…[the] success of the Murray-Darling Basin community programs… demonstrates that it is logistically possible to develop locally relevant activities which involve large numbers of people…" (Lovering in Eastburn and Milligan 1998, p. iv). The Murray-Darling Basin Commission confirmed the importance of cultural events and other forms of community education as part of a successful policy response to land degradation; however, subsequently support was withdrawn.

Another example of the importance of community events in changing the way people understand a place is the annual Kingfisher Festival in Melbourne, organised by the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES 2003). This event focuses on celebrating the Kingfisher as an animal that symbolises the identity of the CERES community environmental park in Brunswick and the surrounding region. Being conducted for the tenth year in 2003 the festival has developed a strong following and encourages broad community participation in activities that link community identity with ecological integrity. In addition to demonstrating how festivals can encourage people to develop their sense of place and link it to ecological systems, the festival further shows that people gain a great deal of satisfaction and enjoyment out of the process (CERES 2003; Ward 2002). This thesis confirms the importance of community events in connecting communities with their environments. These events can give local meaning to social and ecological sustainability in a way that people enjoy. Such events

were raised as a way for adults to learn about places, but these events can also play a large role in environmental education for children.

The two themes of developing sense of place during adulthood discussed in sections 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 pose interesting contrasts and similarities. Their key similarity is that they take people away from their routines. The principal difference is the way that this occurs. Whilst extreme events such as floods and fires force people to see place differently by radically altering the appearance of a place, festivals and community events encourage people to step outside of their normal way of understanding a place voluntarily. A second key difference is that the latter can be engineered whilst the former can not.

7.4 Structural adjustment, place and sense of self

Several of the underlying influences on sense of place discussed in chapter four are tied to non-economic values. Considering these values provides insight into policy concerning structural adjustment in Australian agriculture. The failure of structural adjustment policy in Australia has been tied to its over-emphasis on rational economic principles and insufficient consideration of the non-market values that farmers attach to their land. For example, Botterill (2001a) has investigated structural adjustment schemes aimed at removing unviable farmers from agricultural production. She argued that the lack of interest by farmers for taking up these grants is explained by the non-economic values that farmers have for their agricultural lifestyle which are more important to them than assumed by economic rationalist policy.

Considering why farmers are prepared to endure hardship in order to remain on their farms, Botterill (2001b) argues that farmers are motivated by an agrarian philosophy. An extensive review of the role of agrarian philosophy in Australian agriculture is outside the realm of this thesis; however, there are two central components of this philosophy which are relevant to the current discussion. The first of these is the high value attached to producing a tangible product because these are the basis for the wealth of society. The second aspect is the perceived superiority of rugged rural individualism and self-reliance over the dangerous parasitic attitudes that are fostered in urban life (Aitken 1985; Botterill 2001b). This latter element is considered particularly relevant to the policy context because a focus on self reliance in rural Australia is linked to a rejection of 'hand-outs' thus making financial assistance an unlikely incentive when it comes to abandoning life on the land.

Whilst resolving the complex issues of structural adjustment and financial assistance in Australian agriculture is beyond the extent of this dissertation, this research can provide insight into some of the key questions arising from these issues. The first of these concerns the non-economic values that motivate many rural landholders. The cases studied in this research are consistent with the suggestion that many marginal farmers are philosophically opposed to accepting grants aimed at removing them from agricultural production. However, this research found that many people are more tied to their land than they are to their production. The cases studied in this research included examples of people who were strongly focussed on staying on the land and prepared to sacrifice some of their self reliance and individualism by accepting various forms of government assistance to stay on the land. The precise policy that this assistance was

part of was not clear, and referred to by participants by terms such as 'Centrelink money'. Furthermore, some participants were prepared to accept payouts from de-regulation to exit farming and spend the money on rural residential properties in the area. Is it important to emphasise that whilst these participants were unhappy to be accepting government assistance, it was more important for them to stay on the land. Before generalising based upon this research, it is important to point out that living on a non-productive rural lifestyle in the Atherton Tablelands is perhaps easier than in other Australian agricultural districts, because of the infrastructure and services available within the region or in near by coastal towns. However, it must be emphasised that the findings of this study do suggest that the motivations of rural landholders in responding to policy are more complicated than the notion of self reliance that Botterill (2001a) presents.

The second area of complication for the role of agrarian philosophy in explaining policy failure concerns the emphasis on producing physical goods as being fundamental to rural experience. For the participants in this research, producing a tangible commodity was only one of several underlying rationales for being on the land. Certainly, for some farmers who participated in this research, their sense of self was inherently linked to their ability to produce. For some, it was the basis of their financial livelihood. Yet for others, it was incidental, a convenient way to finance their rural past times such as fishing and hunting. For some, farming became an excuse for being able to enjoy the many other aspects of rural life that appealed to them. There were others who had abandoned farming altogether but continued to live on the farm for non-economic reasons.

The findings of this study confirm the importance of non-economic values of farming for many farmers. However, based on the findings of this research the concept of agrarianism as proposed by Aitken (1985) and Botterill (2001a) is of limited value in exploring or explaining these values in the Atherton Tablelands and Woodstock. Some of the participants in this research were strongly attached to their sense of individualism, self reliance and the superior moral value of agricultural production. For some of these, location was a minor consideration, a mere circumstance for where they could live out their agrarian goals. Yet many participants in this study were more strongly motivated by a different attachment to their land. Their sense of self was attached to their place – independent of their propensity to engage in agricultural production. In exploring these differences the concept of 'post-productivism' appears to be more applicable to the case studies addressed in this research.

7.5 Post-productivist transition in rural Australia

Transitions occurring in Australia's rural regions include a restructuring of agriculture and diversification into areas such as tourism, development of organic farming and a focus on new rural livelihoods (Holmes 2002; Sorensen and Epps 2003). The concept of a 'post-productivist' transition in regional Australia is gaining popularity as a way of characterising and explaining these multi-faceted changes in rural environments. Though this concept was originally developed in response to the changing role of agriculture in Britain, the concept has potential to provide considerable insight into the geography of rural environments in other countries (Wilson 2001).

The concept of post-productivism has emerged from the field of political economy and represents a shift away from the productivist agricultural regime in Britain, which has been strongly focussed on increasing outputs through industrialised agricultural production and emphasises an ideology of agriculture as the focus of rural life (Wilson 2001). By contrast, post-productivism is generally considered to represent a change from the central and privileged position of agriculture in society towards accepting a broader range of rural interests. It is concerned with economic diversification in rural regions and alternative modes of production to those of productivist agriculture (Wilson 2001).

Holmes (2002) proposes the concept of post-productivism as way of conceptualising the complex change in Australia's rangelands that reflects a challenge to the previously production-centric agenda of policy and research. He argues that in the rangelands these changes are the result of a shift towards non-market values that reflect broader national interests including biodiversity conservation and Indigenous land occupance. However, Holmes (2002) argues that in the development of the concept of post-productivism, too much emphasis has been placed on agricultural policies as driving rural transition. He argues that the agricultural policies of post-productivism can also been seen as response to changing directions in rural regions. For Holmes (2002) the themes of agricultural diversification, biodiversity conservation, Indigenous land occupance and alternative rural livelihoods involve change occurring at a grass roots level.

This dissertation provides insights into a post-productivist transition in the Atherton Tablelands. Though less apparent in the small grazing community of Woodstock, for several of the participants from the Atherton Tablelands described land uses that characterise post productivism, including conservation of biodiversity, Indigenous land occupance and nature based tourism. Furthermore, for several participants, sense of place was associated with a strong aspiration to live in an agricultural environment yet not take part in agricultural production directly. Chapter four showed that many of these people were influenced by their childhoods in rural places and by a rejection of urban life. These influences reflect the broader trend of 'amenity oriented recreationists' leaving cities in favour of a rural experience (Holmes 2002). This shift is echoed in northern America by the rise of 'exurban growth' involving people seeking the relaxed lifestyle and access to nature in rural areas (Crump 2003).

Several of the participants in this research identified the case study regions as having features that appealed to their 'amenity' orientation. For example, many participants strongly endorsed nature conservation as an appropriate land use for the Atherton Tablelands. These participants included those who had abandoned former urban lives in favour of a desire to feel nearer nature and to feel that nature was protected from development. Consistent with the idea of 'amenity oriented recreationists' these people described their enthusiasm for bush walks, picnics and other excursions. When asked about the frequency of these events, these participants indicated that they were a relatively rare and symbolic occurrence. More important to them was living in proximity to the forests and wildlife they were seeking to conserve, to see these things

from their verandas and from the windows of their vehicles as they travelled around the district.

In the Atherton Tablelands, amenity oriented recreationists were not only interested in living amongst apparently natural landscapes such as forests and lakes. Several participants emphasised the importance to them of living amongst farming communities and looking out over paddocks yet not participating in agriculture directly. Part of this involved having a close connection to the people who produce the food that they consumed. This will be further discussed in section 8.4.4 in reference to globalisation and feeling a need to belong to a local context. Several of these participants were motivated by having a relaxed pace in their lives. As it was demonstrated in chapter five, their motivation to live amongst these environments and have time to enjoy them did not translate into a desire to engage with these environments through activities such as agriculture. Many participants were satisfied just to be living near the paddocks, and fields they found attractive and occasionally visit a neighbour's farm. Similar to the nature recreationists who observed the forest through the window of their vehicle as they drove around the district, these rural lifestyle residents described gazing at other people's paddocks from the comfort of their veranda or going for an infrequent but symbolic horse ride.

The transition towards post-productivism has both positive and negative implications for regional prosperity and natural resource management in the Atherton Tablelands, and in other rural locations where such transition occurs. The land uses of post-productivism (e.g. biodiversity conservation) are often outside of the market economy

and this can place further stress on regional economies (Holmes 1997). The increase in population associated with alternative land uses and amenity oriented recreationists has the potential to redress the population decline in rural regions caused by structural adjustment in the primary industries. The recently arrived participants in this study represented two principal demographic trends. The first of these was retirees who were attracted to the lifestyle available on their retirement funds. The region is also sufficiently near an urban centre (Cairns) for access to urban infrastructure such as a hospital, retail facilities and an airport. The second broad demographic group were much younger, and represented 'alternative lifestyle' oriented artisans and conservationists who in this study were attracted to ex-forestry towns such as Ravenshoe for their inexpensive housing and proximity to rainforests. On one hand, these new people have the potential to breathe new life into regions that have suffered from decline in their primary industries. However, on the other hand, there is the possibility that the values that attract people to rural regions also create new problems, as retirees progressively struggle to live on their savings and welfare recipients become increasingly marginalised. For these reasons, the land uses and demographics associated with post productivist transition create a considerable challenge for regional planning (Holmes 1997).

The rise of 'amenity oriented' migration has particular implications for some natural resource management issues in rural environments. In this study, participants described having both time and motivation to engage in non-productive aspects of natural resource management such as tree planting in riparian zones and wildlife corridors. Notably, this motivation extended beyond their own properties and didn't appear to be

linked to financial incentives such as taxation benefits. On one hand, this capacity is a valuable resource for natural resource management in regional Australia, especially in cases where there is little individual benefit for property owners in conducting such activities. Yet at the same time, there are further complications concerning the impact of amenity oriented migrants who are not necessarily effective at controlling problems such as environmental weeds and erosion. For example, in this study, long-established dairy farmers complained that since deregulation, neighbouring dairy farmers have been replaced with hobby farmers who allowed problems such as weeds to develop and spread around the district.

Considering the findings of this study in relation to Holmes' (2002) discussion of the Australian rangelands, it would appear that the concept of post-productivist transition goes some way towards explaining changes in rural Australia more generally. This study confirms the approach taken by Holmes (2002) that this transition can be seen as involving grass roots change, rather than a transition driven by changes to policy.

7.6 Local relevance of natural resource management policy

In discussing sustainability and traditional resource management in the Himalayas, Jodha (1998) noted that local governance was a key component to linking social and ecological systems. Drawing lessons for natural resource policy in mountain regions, Jodha (1998) emphasised the need for policy makers to be more sensitised to the specific characteristics of mountain conditions, and to increase the involvement of local communities in decisions about their region. It is argued in this thesis that forming appropriate policy for rural regions requires a preparedness to learn about and respect

these places by engaging with the people who live in them. Several participants in Woodstock and the Atherton Tablelands had strong concerns for the sorts of policies they have to deal with in their rural communities. Underlying these criticisms was the issue that policies were not sensitive to the particularities of the region. Throughout this study people conveyed their concern that the policies that affected them were generated at a desk in a capital city by someone who had very little idea of what it was like to live in the region. In summary, developing policy that meets the needs and aspirations of rural communities can't be done without improved learning about these communities and this requires taking the time and effort to go and meet people and learn from them (Basso 1996).

7.6.1 The importance of local knowledge

The role of local knowledge in learning about sustainable linkages between social and ecological systems is becoming increasingly apparent (Berkes and Folke 1998; Gadgil, Olsson, Berkes and Folke 2003). Central to this interest are several case studies of how local knowledge of a given ecosystem facilitates adapting policies to local conditions (see for example Tengö and Hammer's (2003) study of local knowledge and social-ecosystem links in northern Tanzania). It is relevant then, that there is a strong tendency in Australia for natural resource management facilitators to move from place to place. Interviews conducted for this study revealed the frustrations that established farmers felt when they were told how to farm in North Queensland by freshly trained facilitators from Victoria. Baker (1997) has identified structural problems within natural resource management arrangements that perpetuate such problems such as short term tenure for

NRM facilitators and the need for staff to move away for promotion. One way rural communities have attempted to support the role of local knowledge in natural resource management is to encourage local residents to become natural resource management professionals by undergoing facilitator training and tertiary education (Baker 1997). An alternative response that was encountered in the Atherton Tablelands case study involved local farmers deliberately retraining state agency staff from interstate to adapt them to local conditions. However, even if people can be trained from within rural communities or re-trained once they arrive, strong pressures remain on them to move on either due to lack of funding or the need to move away for promotion. Hence the irony of such a system is that people who develop familiarity with local issues are taken away when they gain this familiarity.

7.6.2 Positive steps

Though the challenges to natural resource management policy discussed in section 7.6.1 are complex and not easily solved, it is possible to identify steps toward improvements. First and foremost, there is a need for policy makers to interact with local places more closely (Jodha 1998). The meanings and aspirations people have for place are contested and change over time and creating policy that meets these needs is difficult. However, generating rural policy from a capital city without involving local people seems to only unite people in their rejection of such policy. Another step towards resolving some of these issues would involve developing ways to support local experts (Berkes and Folke 1998). An example of this would be further support for local communities to train their own NRM facilitators. This may not always be possible, however, and there will still be

a need to support roaming extension officers and facilitators to stay in places for longer periods in order to learn more about local conditions. This would at the very least involve offering longer employment contracts.

7.7 Chapter conclusions and agenda for further research

One of the key messages from this research is the importance of environmental education during childhood as a way to influence sense of place. The experience of these case studies suggests that environmental education would need to be locally relevant and would benefit from involving parents or other family members. Whilst learning about places in childhood was the most influential factor in developing a sense of place, there are also implications from this research for learning in adulthood. Two aspects of adult learning about places emerge as important issues for natural resource management policy. These are seeing places under different conditions and learning about places through community events. What these ways have in common is that they take people out of their usual circumstances. In the case of seeing places under different conditions, this involved an imposed set of circumstances – such as experiencing the trauma of floods and fires. Though a powerful trigger that can leave people searching for explanation, this way of learning can not be engineered. However, from a policy point of view, there is potential to treat these events opportunistically and respond to people's need for explanation through community education. By contrast, the second main type of learning –through community events– can be engineered. In other regions, festivals and exhibitions have proved to be an important component in promoting ecological sustainability. The policy implications are to recognise this as

such in developing future natural resource management programs. There is also a strong case for policy to be generated with increased local insight. An additional challenge for policy makers is to overcome the perception that policies affecting rural regions are generated in capital cities by people who have a poor understanding of the places affected by their policies.

In considering rural regions such as the Atherton Tablelands, the concept of a post-productivist transition helps explain the changes in identity that are occurring. The rationale for seeking a better understanding of this transition is that it can help lead to more heterogenous and multifunctional rural regions (Holmes 2002). Related to this is a series of challenges for further research. The first of these is to better identify the particular suites of values which characterise different rural regions. Though many of the themes of post-productivist transition are broad, it is argued in this dissertation that the particular combinations of these themes is specific to each region and tied to local senses of place. In defining the characteristics of post-productivist regions, it is important to emphasise that their identities will be contested, reflecting the agendas of different individuals and groups. The challenge for natural resource managers and policy makers is to support multi-functional regions, and to incorporate local knowledge which assists members of a community to see and manage the links between social and ecological systems. A task for further research is to identify the aspirations of these transforming regions, and to find ways to more adequately include these in policy making processes.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and lessons for theory

8.1 Overview

In Australia, we continue to grapple with the broader conceptual issues of how we understand and engage with our natural environment (Flannery 2002). As section 1.2.4 has shown, the concept of place offers much potential to contemporary NRM issues as a way of linking different dimensions of environment. Thinking of environments as places assists us to acknowledge the meanings of environments to different people and the way these meanings change over time.

The aim of this research has been to study how people develop their sense of place and how their sense of place is linked to activities in practice. Underlying this has been the theme of how people learn about places and how they respond to change. This concluding chapter will review and synthesise the answers to these questions based upon the analysis presented in chapters four to six. This is followed by revisiting the background concepts discussed in section 3.1.6 that provided the context for this work, and drawing conclusions on what the thesis can add to this theory in section 8.4.

8.2 Research questions revisited: a synthesis

8.2.1 What are the key influences on how people understand their place?

This thesis identified a series of eight themes that represent the key influences on sense of place discussed in this study. Rather than distinct categories, these themes represented overlapping groups of responses. The themes were:

- growing up in place
- a rural childhood elsewhere
- rejection of urban life
- profit
- overcoming adversity
- living in a similar environment overseas
- production focus
- circumstance and specific events

One of the major findings of this thesis is the significance of childhood influences on sense of place. It is important to emphasise that this issue was not something the research set out to prove, rather this finding was grounded very strongly in the interviews analysed for this thesis. This was true for the case of people who grew up in the area and also for those who moved to the area as adults, because they brought with them strong elements of the childhood influences on sense of place. These influences occurred in a different, but somehow similar place. In response to this issue, the notion of 'primal landscapes' was discussed in section 6.4.1. Central to this notion is that the imprints of our childhood interaction with places stay with us

for the rest of our lives and form the basis by which we compare other places when we are older (Gayton 1996). It was also noted that environmental psychologists have paid considerable attention to the role of childhood experiences in nature and how these are linked to seeking engagements with similar natural environments during adult life (Bixler et al. 2002). Yet sociologists and geographers have shown that 'nature' is socially constructed and culturally defined through symbolic interactions with environments (Greider and Garkovich 1994; Meinig 1979). The findings of this thesis emphasise the importance of these symbolic interactions during childhood. The forests, fields and farms described in this thesis were directly linked to the communities and cultures that people grew up in.

Childhood influences were linked to another suite of influences concerned with identity. One of the most powerful examples of how identity was linked to sense of place was concerned with a sense of self that was focussed on agricultural production. In some cases this influence was so strong that it is was all people could talk about. Their sense of self and their sense of place were fused and focused on making the land produce. For others participants this theme was not central to sense of self and sense of place but took a less pronounced form such as feeling the need to grow a few vegetables or raise some chickens to justify themselves being on the land.

Some people were most strongly influenced by their aspirations for financial wealth. Their sense of place was inherently integrated with generating economic profit and the location for where they did so was sometimes incidental. However, it is important to emphasise that these people were in a minority. More common was a desire to overcome adversity, either from personal trauma or social disadvantage.

For these people place was about opportunity, which included favourable economic conditions but was more strongly related to moving beyond their difficult life in another place. For these people, place was strongly influenced by what it was they were leaving behind. Their sense of place was focussed on the absence of oppression or trauma.

One of the key findings of this thesis is that, for people who moved to the case study locations during adulthood, their sense of place was well developed before they had arrived in their place. Only a minority of these participants described significant influences on their sense of place that occurred after their arrival. It can be concluded that once developed, sense of place changes only very little, but is influenced by particular events that take people outside of their everyday life. Examples where this occurred in this research included personal events such as falling pregnant, community events such as festivals and broader societal events such as the declaration of World Heritage. These themes are further discussed in sections 8.4.1 to 8.4.5.

8.2.2 What is the relationship between sense of place and activities in practice?

This study found several ways that sense of place influenced activities in practice which were grouped into six principal themes:

- veranda gazing
- making the land produce
- crafting a particular landscape
- recreating

- community events and festivals
- care for place

There were some interesting relationships between the themes in research question 1 and those in research question 2. The theme of veranda gazing was mostly strong linked to participants who moved to the area. These were people who selected the Atherton Tablelands or Woodstock as places where they could enjoy not being in the city, or think about how the place resembled other places they had known through their travels and in their childhoods. Some of these participants also described their attempts to make the land produce, however, many of them described failed initiatives which they subsequently abandoned. Exceptions to this were participants who, in addition to reconnecting with their rural childhoods or rejecting urban life, were also influenced by a strong desire to overcome adversity. These participants came with a stronger level of determination to escape other circumstances and to rebuild their lives, or as one participant put it ‘make his future’.

Another important relationship concerned people who were influenced by growing up in the area. The practice of their sense of place was most strongly linked to the themes of making the land produce and rambling through the bush. For people who grew up in the area, making the land produce was generally an important, but not exclusive practical dimension to their senses of place. For many of these participants their sense of place was strongly linked to their families and sense of community. Some of these people balanced production with raising their children, and other forms of being in place such as swimming in the local creeks or going hunting.

The final theme of caring for place was expressed explicitly by a minority of participants and more generally by many more (section 5.2.6). Some people essentially thought of themselves as guardians of the land but not actually part of it – they saw themselves as protecting the land from human activity. Other participants communicated that the way they lived their lives was fundamentally dependent upon their place, and that they cared for it very deeply. These participants expressed the importance of a connection to place that spanned longer than their own lifetimes. In one case, a participant described his duty to care for his traditional country as part of his role as a tribal elder. In another case, a participant expressed the desire to maintain and enhance the spirit of the farm that his parents had developed before him.

8.2.3 How do people learn about places, and how do they respond to change?

The research has found nine key themes to the way people learn about place. These fall into two sub groups.

General themes

- Learning about places in childhood
- Learning from elders and friends
- Comparisons between places
- Action and observation

Themes associated particularly with adult learning

- Learning as a lifelong process
- The importance of continuity
- Seeing places under different conditions

- Learning from community events
- Learning from external sources

The importance of learning about places in childhood was discussed by a majority of male and female participants representing a range of different ages, cultures, and backgrounds. The theme stands out as crucial to learning about places. Most participants seemed to have formed a base understanding of a place during childhood which underpinned the way they interacted with their environments later in life. This was the case for people who grew up in the case study locations and for those who moved to them during adult life. Analysis showed that learning about places in childhood had strong relationships with other types of learning. The theme of learning from elders and friends was a theme also strongly associated with learning in childhood. In addition, the theme of learning through comparisons overlapped with the importance of childhood learning because many participants used their childhood experiences as a point of comparison for experiences during adulthood. Furthermore, the theme of learning through action and observation was strongly associated with childhood but also overlapped with adult learning. This will be further considered in the following paragraph.

The people who described the most powerful learning about their place during adulthood emphasised the themes of seeing places under different conditions and becoming involved in community events. What these processes have in common is the role of experiential learning. In this way, these themes overlapped with the theme of 'action and observation', because this type of learning involved direct experience and reflection upon this experience. It has been shown in section 6.4.4 of this thesis that learning about places was broadly consistent with Kolb et al.'s (1995)

cycle of experiential learning, involving observation, reflection, action and theorising. Whilst for some people, this cycle continued to turn and understanding of place continued to evolve during adulthood, for others an approach to understanding places was reached in childhood and then hardly changed. For many of these participants, learning about their place was less important than learning about other issues during adulthood. Part of the explanation concerns motivation and values. Whilst most people were motivated to learn about and rethink their relationship with place throughout their life, others were more interested in learning how to continue their sense of place. For example, for some people adult learning was focussed on how to continue to profit from their farming operations by learning about technical advances in farming practices, rather than rethinking why they were farming.

Whilst values played a major role in determining who continued to learn about their place and who didn't, other factors were also involved. Tied to the issue of values was another issue that emerged very strongly and this was the role of continuation. Several people described the importance of prolonged or repeated experiences in the development of their learning about places. This is not to say that simply going to a place several times or for long periods would be any guarantee of learning about the place. Rather it seems continuity assisted people to deepen their experience and develop a higher level of familiarity through concrete experience. Prolonged and repeated experiences also in turn seemed to facilitate reflection. This provides an interesting link with learning about places by Western Apache Indians. For these people, the key to developing wisdom is to visit as many possible places within their country, and to keep thinking about these places and their symbolic meanings. Dudley Patterson explains how his elders taught him:

> How will you walk along this trail of wisdom? Well, you will go to many places. You must look at them closely. You must remember all of them. Your relatives will talk to you about them. You must remember everything they tell you. You must think about, and keep on thinking about it, and keep on thinking about it (Patterson in Basso 1996, p. 70)

Learning from places is central to developing wisdom for Dudley and his people. The experiential learning of being in place is crucial. Also fundamental is the issue of continuity. In Patterson's case, continuity takes two main forms, going to many places and looking at them closely as well as mentally revisiting places by continually reflection upon them and listening to what relatives say about them. The role of continuity seemed to work in a similar way for participants in my study who found that it not only increased their concrete experience, it provided them with more opportunities to reflect upon this experience and compare it with similar experiences.

Another important conclusion for the way people learn about places concerns life changing events such as having children, experiencing natural disasters or living through a plague of vermin. These situations triggered learning by exposing people to totally new experiences, sometimes causing fear for loss of connection to place. The events represented significant disruption and confronted people with an aspect of living in a place that they previously hadn't encountered. Instead of continuity of experience, what underpinned this learning was the intensity of the experience and having minimal or no prior understanding of how it would affect them. There was, however, a level of continuity in people's reflection on these experiences in that they tended to think about them for a long time afterwards. In this research, some of the events in question occurred several years prior to the interview, yet people continued to reflect upon them as a major way that they learned about their place.

8.2.3.1 Understanding change

One of the conclusions of this thesis is that seeing change in society around oneself is common but seeing change in oneself is rare. In this research the changes that participants described around them covered a broad range of industrial, demographic and environmental considerations. Furthermore, participants readily identified relationships between different types of changes, such as the demographic affects of structural change in the dairy industry and the ecological changes associated with closing the logging industry. Many participants described considerable demographic change and changes in the community character. Many could also relate these changes to the effects of de-regulation in tobacco and dairy and the effect of World Heritage listing on the logging industry. Whilst participants could easily identify change around them and see relationships between various types of changes, they had difficulty explaining these changes. The agents of change were rarely brought up by participants of their own accord, and when asked they responded by giving general or vague answers, such as 'the government' or 'conservation' as the causes of change, rather than specifying which aspect of government or the underlying values associated with the rise of conservation. Chapter six showed that defined this way, many participants did not associate the agents of change with individual people, but rather over simplified issues.

Chapter six further showed that whilst participants could easily describe change in society around them, they found it difficult to identify and describe change that occurred within themselves. Of all the participants who described demographic change around them, only one participant identified herself as part of a demographic

trend. With this exception, other participants did not see themselves as part of the trends they were observing.

Section 6.4.5 of this thesis has shown how people's responses to change fell into three broad areas (though this does not mean that all participants fell neatly into any one category). What was more common was that people responded differently based upon the issue. A minority of responses to change focussed on non-comprehension and rejection – change was something that people didn't like and didn't want to understand. The second category of response involved embracing change and finding a way to benefit from it. Like the first category of response, very few people described responding to change in this way. The final and most common category of responding to change involved accepting change and getting on with life. These responses involved people who didn't necessarily like or dislike change, rather they emphasised how they adapted and found a way to live with it or even benefit from it.

8.3 Research contribution

There are four principal themes to the research contribution in this thesis. First, the thesis has drawn on and integrated a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds including human geography, complex systems, ecofeminism and environmental psychology to explore the context for the concept of place in natural resource management (chapters one and two). It was argued that the concept of place is better suited to attempts of integrating diverse dimensions of environment than the widely accepted 'triple bottom line' – a term which continues to endorse distinctions between social, ecological and economic dimensions. Second, the thesis has

presented a detailed study involving in-depth interviews with 40 participants from Woodstock and the Atherton Tablelands to explore influences on sense of place (chapter four), how these influences relate to practice (chapter five); and what this reveals about the way people learn about places (chapter six). Third, the research has presented the implications of these findings for natural resource policy in Australia (chapter seven). This discussion has emphasised the importance of environmental education in childhood (section 7.1), and supporting learning about places in adulthood (section 7.3). The thesis has also contributed to an emerging discussion of the concept of 'post-productivism' and its role in changing rural regions (section 7.5). Furthermore, the research has considered the relationship between location, place and policy in section 7.6, emphasising local knowledge and the local scale as relevant to natural resource management. Fourth, and finally, the thesis concludes by discussing the theoretical implications of this research in sections 8.4.1 to 8.4.5. These discussions contribute to theory on the life stages when sense of place is most influenced, and on the issue of belonging to local places.

8.4 Theoretical implications

8.4.1 Relph, Piaget and constructivism

In developing the methods for this thesis it was explained how some principles from constructivism were taken up by Relph (1976) to help understand how people develop their sense of place (section 3.1.6). This work emphasised the roles of balancing two interrelated processes adopted from Piaget (1971). The first of these involved 'assimilation' or fitting the external world into our existing mental structures by interpreting what we see in terms of our existing schemas for

understanding. The second principle was 'accommodation' which concerns adapting our mental schemas to accommodate new information that is at odds with the existing schemas. One of the conclusions of this research is that the importance of developing a sense of place in childhood is confirmed. As discussed in detail in sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 6.2.1, the role of childhood experiences are fundamental in establishing the basis for how people understand places throughout adulthood. However, a further conclusion of this thesis is that, in regard to most people's learning about their place, assimilation and accommodation are not balanced throughout adulthood. It is not within the context of this thesis to comment on the broader applicability of Piaget's theory of assimilation and accommodation. However, it is within the realms of this study to consider the way these principles work in specific relation to developing attachments to places. On this basis, the thesis concludes that in the case studies examined for this research there was a strong tendency to maintain a relationship with a place that was based in childhood experiences and assimilate future experiences into this understanding rather than continually accommodate new information about places throughout adult life.

In section 4.3.3, this thesis has argued that many people who moved to the case studies later in life were seeking to re-connect with elements of their childhood, including a sense of belonging to a place. These participants had strong connections to rural communities during childhood but then circumstance took them to live in urban areas for much of their adult lives. With very few exceptions, these participants were disappointed to varying degrees, because in one way or another, their experience of the Atherton Tablelands and Woodstock was not consistent with what they had remembered of rural communities during their childhood. The communities were not as friendly, their time was not as free as they had expected, or

the work was much harder than they had anticipated. All of these participants attempted to explain the reasons for their disappointment, which was most commonly put down to an anomaly of circumstance or lack of personal effort. Some participants in this situation were sufficiently disappointed that they were thinking of returning to the city. Analysing these interviews involved considering if this represented a shift in thinking, whether these people had 'accommodated' their understanding to new adult experiences of living in rural environments which are simply different from their childhood experiences. However, there was no evidence of this realisation amongst the participants interviewed for this study. Amongst some participants, there was evidence of nostalgia, yet what was more broadly evident was a sense of needing to belong, and that there are particular stages in life when sense of place is most strongly influenced. Whilst the whole of childhood seems generally important, there is one phase of childhood that seems particularly relevant. This is discussed in section 8.4.2.

8.4.2 Age, concrete operations and childhood places

One of the conclusions of this thesis is that the basis for developing a sense of place is strongly influenced during the 'concrete operations' phase of childhood development (section 4.3.1). This thesis has shown evidence that participants were strongly influenced by experiences in the age range from about seven to twelve (sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). In this study these experiences included accompanying parents around the farm, playing in the bush with other children and listening to elders as they moved around traditional country. The concrete operations stage is prior to developing full abstract thought and it is the stage when children base their understanding strongly in direct experience (Piaget 2001). It was also shown in

section 4.3.1 that this is the stage when children begin to balance the processes of assimilation and accommodation and the stage when children develop their understanding of spatial and temporal relationships. Yet the importance of the 'concrete operations' stage triggers several questions for further research. Why is it that learning about places in adulthood is so rare? Could it be that the experiential understanding that is so important to place is socially discouraged later in life when formal analytical learning is encouraged? This could be an important issue for further investigation given that direct experience is so important to developing higher level understanding (Flyvberg 2001).

8.4.3 Time, experience and belonging

Peter Read (2000) has observed that there are many different routes to belonging. One of the conclusions of this thesis is that people who grew up in the area tended to express a stronger degree of belonging than those who moved to the area as adults. In several cases this was tied to a connection to a place that spanned greater than participants' own lifetimes. Consistent with principles of rootedness (Tuan 1980) and 'ancestral sense of place' (Hay 1998), belonging was very strongly expressed by participants in this study who had inherited a place from their ancestors and intended to look after it for their children. As with Hay's study, this phenomenon was expressed by both Indigenous and non-indigenous participants. These were participants who strongly related their sense of self and their sense of place. The creeks, Bora grounds, paddocks and towns were deeply embedded in their traditions, work and relationships.

This is not to suggest that all the participants who moved to the place of the interview during adulthood did not express any sense of belonging. For many of these participants, belonging to their place seemed to represent a stage in life, a unique set of experiences that were tied to a particular location at a particular time. The findings of this thesis suggest that there are stages of life and unique experiences which are strongly tied to developing belonging to place. One of these experiences involved falling pregnant. Three of the 17 women interviewed for this thesis described this experience as pivotal in rethinking their sense of self relative to their social and natural environments. For these participants, falling pregnant was strongly tied to making a shift from leading an itinerant lifestyle towards a strong desire to settle. It involved forming a bond that bound these women to a place, and as such it was very strongly associated with belonging.

Other participants expressed the phenomenon of desiring to settle when they found their place on the Atherton Tablelands after lengthy travels. For some of these participants, this was an instant realisation – they found the place they had always been looking for. For others it was a gradual and uncomfortable transition – they reluctantly succumbed to it. These findings shed some light on the way people develop belonging. Prior to arriving their place, some of these participants expressly set out to find the place they belonged to. Others did not explicitly set out to look for a place of belonging, but they found one along the way.

8.4.4 Globalisation and embeddedness

In reviewing literature on place relevant to this thesis, the role of embeddedness and place as agenda were raised as important aspects of the concept (section 2.4.7).

Humanists such as Relph (1976) were concerned with the role of place in uplifting human experience. By contrast, ecologists have argued that the principles underlying western philosophy are inherently unsustainable because they create the illusion that we are separate from nature (Passmore, 1974). Plumwood (2002) proposes the concept of place as one way to dispel the distinction between humans and nature.

This thesis reveals some insights about the relationship between embeddedness and sense of place. Some of the participants in this study conveyed a strong sense that they acknowledged how their lives were interdependent with their environments. This manifested itself in many ways, for example when people spoke about their sense of self and sense of place as being strongly linked. For others it was visible when they described their efforts to care for place – either in a physical way such as replanting riparian vegetation or in a spiritual way, such as respecting sacred areas. Participants who expressed embeddedness were frequently people who had lived in the same place for a long time. People who conveyed a strong sense of embeddedness were those who had a connection to their place that spanned longer than their own lifetime (section 8.4.3). It was not only their place, but also the place of their ancestors and their children. In addition to the temporal component to embeddedness in this study, the people who conveyed this notion also described a strong experiential connection to a place on a routine basis – through such activities as agricultural production, from looking after traditional country, conducting vegetation rehabilitation and from spending time thinking in place.

Also of interest is that several participants showed signs that they were seeking greater belonging and embeddedness. This was particularly the case for people who

were abandoning an urban life and wanted to see the signs of nature around them in the form of forests, lakes and mountains. Several wanted to be part of a small rural community, to know and trust people around them, and to make the links between their social and ecological environments more visible. One of the ways this manifested itself was through the desire to buy and consume food from local markets that was grown within the district. Buying locally grown food was a symbolic issue in the Atherton Tablelands and Woodstock (section 4.3.5). The small shops that sold produce from the region were considered to be supportive of the local community and of local livelihoods. Furthermore, this was considered to be promoting the consumption of safe food that was grown responsibly. By contrast, the supermarkets that sold imported produce were considered by some participants to represent the ills of globalisation – undermining local economies by distributing placeless, unsafe and flavourless food.

Whilst section 8.4.1 has shown that many people seeking belonging were disappointed, consuming locally produced food was one way that participants described assisting them to develop a stronger connection to their community. The findings of this thesis are consistent with the concept of civic agriculture proposed by DeLind (2002), in that some participants felt a greater sense of belonging partly through the food itself, but also through the modes of acquiring it – the local markets, road side sellers and from neighbours. As such the food was a symbol of local identity and engagement with their place, and newcomers sharing this food with established locals generated a bond between them.

It was shown in section 4.3.5 that emerging literature in rural geography and rural sociology urges caution in regard to the rise of alternative local food networks. This

literature argues that locally produced food is not necessarily better or more responsible (Winter 2003; Hinrichs 2003). However, despite these issues, the emphasis on local food in this study can be characterised as reflecting a desire to make the relationships between social and natural systems more visible. In this study, supporting local agriculture was symbolic of acknowledging the links between the farmer and the consumer, and between the field and the table. It was symbolic of acknowledging the interrelationships between society and nature, which were more tangible to participants at a local scale. Though these interactions became visible to people at the local scale in this study, this does not imply that such links need to be invisible at larger scales for different people in other contexts.

8.4.5 Placelessness, globalisation and agriculture

It is important to point out that some participants demonstrated very few signs of embeddedness and belonging. These were business oriented farmers who expanded their operations through efficiencies whilst others were being forced out of their industries. Consistent with a symbolic interactionist approach to place (Greider and Garkovich 1994), sense of place for these participants was strongly focussed on agricultural production and other aspects of their places were dismissed as irrelevant. Interviews with these participants demonstrated the links between globalisation and a placeless agriculture, an agriculture of expansion and efficiency. It was an agriculture that was not concerned with the broader impacts of high inputs on ecosystems. But it is important to emphasise that these participants represented a minority in this study.

Other participants showed that it is possible to be a profitable and efficient agricultural producer yet be sensitive to local environments and participate in local communities. Some farmers described ways to increase their profitability whilst reducing inputs and fine tuning their farming operations to local characteristics. Several farmers saved on water costs and spread grazing pressure by using water troughs and fencing off creek banks. Some dairy farmers reduced fertilizer applications through greater use of companion crops to increase available nitrogen in the soils. By planting trees, one provided shade for his cattle, which made them more comfortable and this increased milk production. Another saved on transport costs and received higher prices for his crops by sending digital images of his product to potential buyers before it was dispatched to wholesalers. Some of these participants sold their produce locally and others over great distances, however, they maintained a strong sense of local identity and attachment to place. These participants showed that local attachment, small scale innovation and tuning management to the character of local environments provides alternatives to the problems of globalisation.

The problem with globalisation is not that it removes the links between people and environments, rather it is that globalisation *obscures* them. This is why the concept of place remains so important. It helps people to see themselves as part of nature, and how social, economic and ecological dimensions of environment are interlinked (Plumwood 2002). In chapter seven it was raised that many participants emphasised a strong desire to live amongst a small community in an agricultural environment, and this has significant implications for natural resource management policy. In the context of the current discussion, it can be argued that these people were seeking to re-embed themselves in an agricultural environment as a response to the negative

effects of globalisation. In this study this did not constitute a complete rejection of globalisation, rather a response to certain aspects of it. This thesis argues that the actions of these participants reflect broader trends in rural environments. These changes are represented by the concept of a 'post productivist' transition (Holmes 2002). People see great value in these rural places beyond their direct role in agricultural production – they are places where people can sense the links between human and natural systems that have become invisible through the effects of globalisation. In terms of relevance to policy making, section 7.5 has shown that there are both positive and negative effects of the post-productivist shift in values. The same applies for conclusions about theory. As attention towards the effects of globalisation has increased, geographers have warned of the potential for drawing boundaries and defensive forms of localism (Winter 2003). However, this would represent a subversion of the concept of place. Massey (1994) has clearly shown that place can be conceptualised in terms of relationships rather than boundaries. This way, it is easier to see how a sense of place can adapt as relationships change, and this adaptability is crucial to sustainability.

8.5 What is the future for place in natural resource management?

This thesis has focussed on how sense of place is influenced at different stages of our lives and through key experiences. In doing so, the thesis has shown how the concept of place continues to offer considerable potential for understanding change in regional Australia. The changing character of Australia's rural regions has significant implications for policy makers. To understand these transitions, it is important for policy makers to learn to think of regions as places as well as

economies and ecosystems. Understanding change means understanding what triggers change, and underlying the key influences on sense of place is experiential learning. This type of learning begins in childhood, and for some this is where it seems to stop. The thesis has shown that experiential learning about places can occur during adulthood under certain conditions. One of these is through community events. In this study such learning occurred through placed based festivals; however, the same principle has been found in placed based exhibitions (Eastburn and Milligan 1998). Whilst on one hand experiential learning can be induced though community involvement, it can also be triggered by changing circumstances and extreme events. This sort of learning can occur from rat plagues, floods and bush fires that act as triggers of learning (for example Mathews 2003). Whether triggered through education or extreme events, healthy relationships with places require the ability to re-evaluate our relationships with each other and the environments we live in. Research in this area emphasises the role of the local scale and local knowledge, and developing policies that are respectful to local conditions (Folke, Berkes and Colding 1998). The concept of place continues to have a major role in this area. We need to celebrate our relationships with places and not take them for granted.

References

Aitken, D. (1985). "Countrymindedness" - the spread of an idea. *Australian Cultural History,* 4, pp. 34-41

Baker, A. R. H. (1992). On ideology and landscape, in A. R. H. Baker and G. Biger (Eds.) *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective: essays on the meanings of some places in the past*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 1-14

Baker, R. (1997). Landcare: policy, practice and partnerships. *Australian Geographical Studies,* 35 (1), pp. 61-73

Baker, R., Davies, J., and Young, E. (2001). Working on Country: contemporary Indigenous management of Australia's lands and coastal regions. Oxford University Press, South Melbourne

Barry, J. (1999). *Environment and Social Theory*. Routledge, London

Basso, K. H. (1996). Wisdom sits in places: notes on a Western Apache landscape, in S. Feld and K. H. Basso (Eds.) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press, Sante Fe, pp. 53-90

Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Allen Lane, London

Berkes, F., Colding, J., and Folke, C. (2003). *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: building resilience for complexity and change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Berkes, F. and Folke, C. (1998). *Linking Social and Ecological Systems: management practices and social mechanisms for building resilience*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Bixler, R. D., Floyd, M. F., and Hammitt, W. E. (2002). Environmental socialization: quantitative tests of the childhood play hypothesis. *Environment and Behavior,* 34 (6), pp. 795-818

Botterill, L. (2001a). *Policy approaches to farm exit: some factors influencing the efficacy of Commonwealth programs.* Bureau of Rural Sciences, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra

Botterill, L. (2001b). Rural policy assumptions and policy failure: the case of the re-establishment grant scheme. *Australian Journal of Public Administration,* 60 (4), pp. 9-16

Brandenburg, A. M. and Carroll, M. S. (1995). Your place or Mine?: the effect of place creation on environmental values and landscape meanings. *Society & Natural Resources,* 8 (4), pp. 381-398

Braud, W. and Anderson, R. (1998). *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences: honoring human experience*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California

Brown, B. (1986). *Lake Pedder*. The Wilderness Society, Hobart

Canter, D. (2001). Special editorial: symbol and threatened places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 21 (4), pp. 325

Cantrill, J. G. and Senecah, S. L. (2001). Using the 'sense of self-in-place' construct in the context of environmental policy-making and landscape planning. *Environmental Science and Policy,* 4 (4-5), pp. 185-203

Carr, A. (2002). *Grass Roots and Green Tape: principles and practices of environmental stewardship*. The Federation Press, Liechhardt, NSW

Casey, E. (1996). How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time, in S. Feld and K. H. Basso (Eds.) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press, Sante Fe, pp. 14-51

CERES [Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies] (accessed 22/4/2003). *Kingfisher Festival homepage*. http://www.ceres.org.au/community/events/kingfisher.html#kf02

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: objectivist and constructivist methods, in N. K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, pp. 509-535

Checkland, P. B. (1981). *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester

Cheng, A., Kruger, L. E., and Daniels, S. E. (2003). "Place" as an integrating concept in natural resource politics: propositions for a social science research agenda. *Society & Natural Resources,* 16 (3), pp. 87-104

Colding, J., Elmqvist T. and Olsson P. (2003). Living with disturbance: building resilience in social-ecological systems, in F. Berkes, J. Colding, and C. Folke (Eds.) *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: building resilience for complexity and change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 163-185

Cottrell, A. (2002). Is it a locality or is it a community?: awareness and preparedness for natural hazards in north Queensland. Paper presented at *XV World Congress of Sociology 7-13 July*, Brisbane

Crump, J. R. (2003). Finding a place in the country: exurban and suburban development in Sonoma County, California. *Environment and Behavior,* 35 (2), pp. 187-202

Davidson-Hunt, I. J. and Berkes, F. (2003). Nature and society through the lens of resilience: toward a human-in-ecosystem perspective, in F. Berkes, J. Colding, and C. Folke (Eds.) *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: building resilience*

for complexity and change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp.53-82

DeLind, L. B. (2002). Place, work, and civic agriculture: common fields for cultivation. *Agriculture and Human Values,* 19 (3), pp. 217-224

Derr, V. (2002). Children's sense of place in northern New Mexico. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 22 (1-2), pp. 125-137

Eastburn, D. and Milligan, A. (1998). *Reading the Land Workshop Proceedings*. Murray Darling Basin Commission, Australia

Eisenhauer, B. W., Krannich, R. S., and Dale, J. B. (2000). Attachments to special places on public lands: an analysis of activities, reason for attachments, and community connections. *Society & Natural Resources,* 13 (5), pp. 421-441

Ellemor, H. M. (1998). *Place and Natural Resource Management: the case of the Barmah-Millewa forest, Australia.* Doctoral Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra

Escobar, A. (2001). Culture sits in places: reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization. *Political Geography,* 20 (2), pp. 139-174

Ewert, A. W. (1996). *Natural Resource Management: the human dimension*. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado

Flannery, T. (accessed 2/2/2002). *The day, the land, the people: Australia Day Address 2002*. http://www.adc.nsw.gov.au/tim_welcome.html

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Folke, C., Berkes, F., and Colding, J. (1998). Ecological practices and social mechanisms for building resilience and sustainability, in F. Berkes and C. Folke (eds) *Linking Social and Ecological Systems: management practices and social mechanisms for building resilience*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 414-436

Frawley, K. (1988). Exploitation to preservation: appraisals of the rainforest lands of north-east Queensland, Australia. Paper presented at *26th Congress of the International Geographical Union August 1988*. University of Sydney, Sydney Australia

Gadgil, M., Olsson, P., Berkes, F., and Folke, C. (2003). Exploring the role of local ecological knowledge in ecosystem management: three case studies, in F. Berkes, J. Colding, and C. Folke (Eds.) *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: building resilience for complexity and change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 189-209

Gasteyer, S. and Flora, C. B. (2000). Measuring ppm with tennis shoes: science and locally meaningful indicators of environmental quality. *Society & Natural Resources,* 13 (6), pp. 589-597

Gayton, D. (1996). *Landscapes of the Interior: re-explorations of nature and the human spirit*. New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, Canada

Glacken, C. (1967). *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: nature and culture in western thought from ancient times to the end of the 18th Century.* University of California Press, Berkeley

Goodall, B. (1987). *Penguin Dictionary of Human Geography*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, U.K.

Greider, T. and Garkovich, L. (1994). Landscapes: the social construction of nature and the environment. *Rural Sociology,* 59 (1), pp. 1-24

Gubrium, J. and Holstein, J. (2000). Analyzing Interpretive Experience, in N. K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, pp. 487-508

Gururani, S. (2002). Forests of pleasure and pain: gendered practices of labor and livelihood in the forest of the Kumaon Himalayas, India. *Gender, Place and Culture,* 9 (3), pp. 229-243

Hansson, C. B. and Wackernagel, M. (1999). Rediscovering place and accounting for space: how to re-embed the human economy. *Ecological Economics,* 29 (2), pp. 203-213

Hay, R. (1998). Sense of place in developmental context. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 18 (1), pp. 5-29

Head, L. (2000). *Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Change*. Arnold, London

Healey, P. (1997). *Collaborative Planning: shaping places in fragmented societies*. Macmillan Press, Hampshire

Heidegger, M. (1958). *The Question of Being*. Twayne Publishers, New York

Hidalgo, M. C. and Hernandez, B. (2001). Place attachment: conceptual and empirical questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 21 (3), pp. 273-281

Hinrichs, C. C. (2003). The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 19 (1), pp. 33-45

Hoffman, E. (1989). *Lost in Translation: a life in a new language*. E.P. Dutton, New York

Holling, C. S. (2003). The backloop to sustainability, in F. Berkes, J. Colding, and C. Folke (Eds.) *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: building resilience for complexity and change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. xv-xxi

Holling, C. S., Berkes, F., and Folke, C. (1998). Science, sustainability and resource management, in F. Berkes and C. Folke (Eds.) *Linking Social and Ecological*

Systems: management practices and social mechanisms for building resilience. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 342-362

Holmes, J. H. (1997). Diversity and change in Australia's rangeland regions: translating resource values into regional benefits. *The Rangeland Journal,* 19 (1), pp. 3-25

Holmes, J. H. (2002). Diversity in Australia's rangelands: a post-productivist transition with a difference. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 27 (3), pp. 362-384

Huggins, J., Huggins, R., and Jacobs, J. M. (1995). Kooramindanjie: place and the postcolonial. *History Workshop Journal,* 39, pp. 165-181

Irwin, A. (2001). *Sociology and the Environment: a critical introduction to society, nature and knowledge*. Polity Press, Cambridge U.K.

Jacobson, H.K. and Price, M.F. (1990). *A framework for research on the human dimensions of global environmental change.* International Social Science Council with the co-operation of UNESCO, Paris

Jodha, N. S. (1998). Reviving the social system-ecosystem links in the Himalayas, in F. Berkes and C. Folke (Eds.) *Linking Social and Ecological Systems: management practices and social mechanisms for building resilience*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 285-310

Johnson, L. (2000). *Placebound: Australian feminist geographies*. Oxford University Press, South Melbourne

Johnston, W. R. (2000). An environmental education for a local community: knowing the Border Ranges, in S. Dovers (Ed.) *Environmental History and Policy: still settling Australia*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 146-164

Jorgensen, B. S. and Stedman, R. (2001). Sense of place as an attitude: lakeshore owners attitudes toward their properties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 21 (3), pp. 233-248

Kemmis, D. (1996). Community and the politics of place, in P. D. Brick and R. McGreggor Cawley (Eds.) *A Wolf in the Garden: the land rights movement and the new environmental debate*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Maryland, U.S.A., pp. 235-248

Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., and Swanson, R. A. (1998). *The Adult Learner: the definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. 5th ed. Butterworth-Heinemann, Woburn, MA, USA

Kolb, D. A., Osland, J. S., and Rubin, I. M. (1995). *Organizational Behavior: an experiential approach*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey

Krippner, G. R. (2001). The elusive market: embeddedness and the paradigm of economic sociology. *Theory and Society,* 30 (6), pp. 775-810

Kruger, L. E. and Shannon, M. A. (2000). Getting to know ourselves and our places through participation in civic social assessment. *Society & Natural Resources,* 13 (5), pp. 461-478

Layder, D. (1998). *Sociological Practice: linking theory and social research*. Sage Publications, London

Lukermann, F. (1964). Geography as formal intellectual discipline and the way in which it contributes to human knowledge. *Canadian Geographer,* 8 (4), pp. 167-172

Malinowski, J. and Thurber, C. A. (1996). Developmental shifts in the place preferences of boys aged 8-16 years. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 16 (1), pp. 45-54

Marans, R. W. (2003). Understanding environmental quality through quality of life studies: the 2001 DAS and its use of subjective and objective indicators. *Landscape and Urban Planning,* 65 (1-2), pp. 73-83

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research*. 3rd ed. Sage publications, Newbury Park, USA

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender*. Polity Press, Cambridge

Mathews, S. (2003). *How did the Fire Know We Lived Here?: Canberra's bushfires January 2003*. Gininderra Press, Canberra

McDowell, L. and Massey, D. (1984). A woman's place, in D. Massey and J. Allen (Eds.) *Geography Matters! a reader*. Cambridge University Press, London, pp. 128-147

McTaggart, W. D. (1993). Bioregionalism and regional geography: place, people and networks. *Canadian Geographer,* 37 (4), pp. 307-319

Meinig, D. W. (1979). The beholding eye: ten versions of the same scene, in D. W. Meinig (Ed.) *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*. Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 33-48

Meppem, T. (2000). The discursive community: evolving institutional structures for planning sustainability. *Ecological Economics,* 34 (1), pp. 47-61

Meppem, T. (2001). *Moree Place Management.* University of New England, Armidale

Moore, S. A. (1997). 'Place' and sustainability: research opportunities and dilemmas. Paper presented at F. Vanclay and L. Mesiti (Eds.) *Sustainability and Social Research: proceedings of the Conference of Australian Association for Social Research*. Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga

Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social Research Methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 3rd ed. Allyn and Bacon, Boston

Passmore, J. (1974). Man's Responsibility For Nature: ecological problems and western traditions. Duckworth, London, U.K.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Sage Publications, Newbury Park

Piaget, J. (1971). *Biology and Knowledge*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Piaget, J. (1980). *Six Psychological Studies*. Harvester Press, Sussex

Piaget, J. (2001). *The Psychology of Intelligence*. Routledge, London

Pinkerton, E. (1998). Integrated management of a temperate montane forest ecosystem through wholistic forestry: a British Columbia example, in F. Berkes and C. Folke (Eds.) *Linking Social and Ecological Systems: management practices and social mechanisms for building resilience*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 363-389

Plumwood, V. (1993). *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge, London

Plumwood, V. (2002). *Environmental Culture: the ecological crisis of reason*. Routledge, London

Rapoport, A. (1994). A critical look at the concept of place. *National Geographic Journal of India,* 40

Read, P. (1996). *Returning to Nothing: the meaning of lost places*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Read, P. (2000). *Belonging: Australians, place and Aboriginal ownership*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. Pion Limited, London

Sagoff, M. (1996). Settling America: the concept of place in environmental politics, in P. D. Brick and R. McGreggor Cawley (Eds.) *A Wolf in the Garden: the land rights movement and the new environmental debate*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, Maryland, U.S.A., pp. 249-260

Schroeder, H. W. (1996). Ecology of the heart: understanding how people experience natural environments, in A. W. Ewert (Ed.) *Natural Resource Management: the human dimension*. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, pp. 13-28

Sorensen, T. and Epps, R. (2003). The role of tourism in the economic transformation of the central west Queensland economy. *Australian Geographer,* 34 (1), pp. 73-89

Spiller, R. (2000). Ethical Business and Investment: a model for business and society. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 27 (1/2), pp. 149-160

Stedman, R. (2002). Toward a social psychology of place: predicting behavior from place-based cognitions, attitude, and identity. *Environment and Behavior,* 34 (5), pp. 561-581

Stefanovic, I. L. (1998). Phenomenological encounters with place: Cavtat to square one. *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 18 (1), pp. 31-44

Stefanovic, I. L. (2000). *Safeguarding Our Common Future: rethinking sustainable development*. State University of New York, Albany, USA

Stoll-Kleeman, S. and O'Riordan, T. (2002). Enhancing biodiversity and humanity, in T. O'Riordan and S. Stoll-Kleeman (Eds.) *Biodiversity, Sustainability and Human Communities: protecting beyond the protected*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 295-310

Tengö, M. and Hammer, M. (2003). Management practices for building adaptive capacity: a case from northern Tanzania, in F. Berkes, J. Colding, and C. Folke (Eds.) *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: building resilience for complexity and change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., pp. 132-162

Tuan, Y.-F. (1974). Space and place: humanistic perspective. *Progress in Geography,* 6, pp. 211-252

Tuan, Y.-F. (1980). Rootedness versus sense of place. *Landscape,* 34, pp. 3-8

Tuan, Y.-F. (1990). *Topohilia*. 2nd ed. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey

Ward, M. (2002). The CERES Return of the Sacred Kingfisher Festival Celebrating Environmental and Community Renewal. Paper presented at *Environment, Culture and Community Conference*. University of Queensland, Brisbane

Werner, O. and Schoepfle, G. M. (1987). *Systematic Fieldwork: Foundations of ethnography and interviewing Vol. 1*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California

WTMA [Wet Tropics Management Authority] (2003). A Chronology of the Protection and Management of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (WTQWHA). Wet Tropics Management Authority, Cairns, Australia

Whittaker, A. (1998). Talk about cancer: environment and health in Oceanpoint. *Health & Place,* 4 (4), pp. 313-325

Williams, D. R. and Patterson, M. E. (1996). Environmental meaning and ecosystem management: perspectives from environmental psychology and human geography. *Society & Natural Resources,* 9, (5) pp. 507-521

Williams, D. R. and Patterson, M. E. (1999). Environmental Psychology: mapping landscape meanings for ecosystem management, in H. K. Cordell and J. C. Bergstrom (Eds.) *Integrating Social Sciences with Ecosystem Management: human dimensions in assessment, policy and management*. Sagamore Publishing, USA, pp. 141-160

Wilson G (2001). From productivism to post-productivism and back again: exploring the (un)changed natural and mental landscapes of European agriculture. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 26 (1), pp. 77-102

Winter, M. (2003). Embeddedness, the new food economy and defensive localism. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 19 (1), pp. 23-32

Woodhill, A. J. (1999). *Sustaining Australia: a political economic critique of natural resource management.* Doctoral Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra

Woodhill, A. J. and Röling, N. G. (1998). The second wing of the eagle: the human dimension in learning our way to more sustainable futures, in N. G. Röling and M. A. E. Wagemakers (Eds.) *Facilitating Sustainable Agriculture: participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty*. Cambridge University Press, U.K., pp. 46-71

Appendix 1: Woodstock study interview guide

My name is Tom Measham, and I'm enrolled as a student at the Australian National University in Canberra. I'm based at the CSIRO Davies Lab in Townsville. I'm conducting a study on communities and *places* in North Queensland and how they have changed over time. Woodstock is one of the communities I'd like to include.

I'm interested in hearing an individual perspective on how you think the *place* has changed over the time you have been here, in terms of the community, and the landscape.

These interviews will only be used for my own university study.

If you don't want me to keep a record on any point – I won't.

To assist me in writing up an accurate summary of our conversation, I would like to tape the interview. Do you permit me to do this?

If at the end of the interview you feel you would like to have a copy of my interview notes, I'd be happy to provide them.

To begin with, could you tell me when you came here, and how long you have been in the area?

Could you talk through some of your early memories of the *place*?

Tell me about how the *place* has changed since you have been here?

Can you describe how the landscape has changed? Do you feel it is in better or worse shape today?

Who would you recommend I talk to do to get a range of perspectives on how the *place* has changed over the years?

Thanks for helping me with my study

Appendix 2: Atherton Tablelands study interview guide

My name is Tom Measham, and I'm enrolled as a student at the Australian National University in Canberra. I'm conducting a study on the Atherton Tablelands looking at the themes of people, *places* and natural resources in North Queensland. The purpose of the interviews is to help me with my own university study.

If you don't want me to keep a record on any point – I won't.

If you tell me something you think is sensitive, let me know and I won't mention it in writing my thesis.

Your name will not appear in the body of the thesis, but I can mention it in the acknowledgements if you would like.

To assist me in writing up an accurate summary of our conversation, I would like to tape the interview. Do you permit me to do this?

Do you have any questions? Is it OK to proceed on this basis?

Questions

How long have you been in the Atherton Tablelands, and how did you come to be here?

Could you describe the nature of your activities in the Atherton Tablelands?

What changes have you noticed about the Tablelands since you have been here?

How would you compare the Atherton Tablelands to other *places* you have lived in or visited? What do you like and dislike about the Tablelands?

How important is a sense of community to your experience of the Tablelands? (e.g. neighbours, community groups)

In your opinion, what types of experiences have influenced the way you view the Tablelands?

Do you mind telling me a few demographic details?

M / F Age group: type of education / training:

Have you got any other comments?

Thanks for helping me with my study.

Appendix 3: List of analysis codes

NVivo revision 1.3.146 Licensee: CSIRO

Project: Place Constructions User: Administrator Date: 7/22/2003 - 10:21:27 PM
NODE LISTING
Nodes in Set: All Nodes
Created: 1/29/2002 - 12:13:46 PM
Modified: 7/22/2003 - 10:19:24 PM
Number of Nodes: 287

1 authenticity
2 belonging
3 bonding with place
4 childhood influences
5 climate
6 core farming identity
7 cows general
8 culture lack
9 dairy country is healthy
10 dairy general
11 de-regulation destroys land
12 difficult to make friends
13 ecological health
14 emotions and 'the land'
15 emplacement of ideas
16 ethnicity~culture
17 evidence of flexibility
18 expectations~disappointment
19 farmer's boundaries - fences
20 farming, $ & environment
21 former places
22 gender
23 hardship
24 having children
25 'I worked hard to get what I've got'
26 'I wouldn't live anywhere else'!
27 identity and appearance
28 identity and practice
29 incongruence within interviews
30 interaction with Indigenous peoples
31 leaving place
32 listening and learning
33 material obsession
34 methods considerations
35 multiple roles
36 native wildlife
37 nature~farm dichotomy
38 past family link
39 people care about people
40 place lost~ it's all gone
41 place retains former aspects
42 place visualisation
43 pre-disposition
44 pride in product
45 productivity focus
46 racialism
47 red-neck culture

48 reject eco authority
49 rural isolation
50 rural paranoia
51 security of the country
52 simplicity of life
53 southern-European migration
54 spiritual aspects of place
55 stewardship
56 timber harvester-wood craft link
57 timing of becoming aware
58 to be in love with place
59 urban-rural dichotomy
60 'we didn't know no different'
61 work~life dichotomy
62 (1) /responses to questions
63 (1 1) /responses to questions/coming to be
64 (1 1 1) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for
65 (1 1 1 1) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/rural lifestyle
66 (1 1 1 2) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/entrepreneur spirit
67 (1 1 1 3) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/cultural heritage
68 (1 1 1 4) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/suitable for agriculture
69 (1 1 1 5) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/natural beauty
70 (1 1 1 6) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/circumstance
71 (1 1 1 7) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/live in harmony with nature
72 (1 1 1 8) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/geography
73 (1 1 1 9) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/desire to farm since childhood
74 (1 1 1 10) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/be own boss
75 (1 1 1 11) /responses to questions/coming to be/move for/unhappy with previous urban life
76 (1 1 2) /responses to questions/coming to be/born~raised in district
77 (1 1 2 1) /responses to questions/coming to be/born~raised in district/inherited place
78 (1 1 2 2) /responses to questions/coming to be/born~raised in district/moved away and returned
79 (1 1 2 3) /responses to questions/coming to be/born~raised in district/purchased current property
80 (1 1 2 4) /responses to questions/coming to be/born~raised in district/place by default
81 (1 1 2 5) /responses to questions/coming to be/born~raised in district/came as a young child
82 (1 1 2 6) /responses to questions/coming to be/born~raised in district/reluctant
83 (1 1 3) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying
84 (1 1 3 1) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/fell pregnant
85 (1 1 3 2) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/lack of opportunity
86 (1 1 3 3) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/family
87 (1 1 3 4) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/money
88 (1 1 3 5) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/circumstance
89 (1 1 3 6) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/transition
90 (1 1 3 7) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/childhood happiness
91 (1 1 3 8) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/different
92 (1 1 3 9) /responses to questions/coming to be/reason for staying/same
93 (1 1 4) /responses to questions/coming to be/'property chose me'
94 (1 2) /responses to questions/nature of activities
95 (1 2 1) /responses to questions/nature of activities/fertilizing
96 (1 2 2) /responses to questions/nature of activities/change grass
97 (1 2 3) /responses to questions/nature of activities/having kids

98 (1 2 4) /responses to questions/nature of activities/fencing
99 (1 2 5) /responses to questions/nature of activities/weed removal
100 (1 2 6) /responses to questions/nature of activities/outdoor recreation
101 (1 2 7) /responses to questions/nature of activities/rehabilitating land
102 (1 2 8) /responses to questions/nature of activities/clearing native vegetation
103 (1 2 9) /responses to questions/nature of activities/cattle grazing
104 (1 2 10) /responses to questions/nature of activities/introduced chooks
105 (1 2 11) /responses to questions/nature of activities/introduced plants
106 (1 2 12) /responses to questions/nature of activities/horse care
107 (1 2 13) /responses to questions/nature of activities/new structures
108 (1 2 14) /responses to questions/nature of activities/dairy
109 (1 2 15) /responses to questions/nature of activities/planting exotic trees
110 (1 2 16) /responses to questions/nature of activities/eco friendly farming
111 (1 2 17) /responses to questions/nature of activities/water infrastructure
112 (1 2 18) /responses to questions/nature of activities/wood craft
113 (1 2 19) /responses to questions/nature of activities/caring for farm
114 (1 2 20) /responses to questions/nature of activities/clearing up rubbish
115 (1 3) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced
116 (1 3 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual
117 (1 3 1 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/scale
118 (1 3 1 1 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/scale/realising personal plans
119 (1 3 1 1 6) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/scale/only minor changes
120 (1 3 1 9) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/process
121 (1 3 1 9 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/process/trial and error
122 (1 3 1 9 2) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/process/work with NRM agency
123 (1 3 1 10) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content
124 (1 3 1 10 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/attitude towards community
125 (1 3 1 10 2) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/adopting rural residential lifestyle
126 (1 3 1 10 3) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/impact on nature
127 (1 3 1 10 4) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/increased resilience
128 (1 3 1 10 5) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/re-thinking ethics
129 (1 3 1 10 6) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/increasing production
130 (1 3 1 10 7) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/personal investment in dwelling
131 (1 3 1 10 8) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/appreciation of nature
132 (1 3 1 10 9) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/striving for sustainability
133 (1 3 1 10 10) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/vegetation cover
134 (1 3 1 10 11) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/business success
135 (1 3 1 10 12) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/individual/content/risk to livelihood
136 (1 3 2) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal
137 (1 3 2 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/structure of primary industries
138 (1 3 2 2) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/tree planting
139 (1 3 2 3) /responses to questions/Changes

seen~experienced/societal/demographic
140 (1 3 2 4) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/rise of tourism
141 (1 3 2 5) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/return land to Aboriginal people
142 (1 3 2 6) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/rise of alternative lifestyle
143 (1 3 2 7) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/attitude change
144 (1 3 2 7 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/attitude change/dependency
145 (1 3 2 8) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/urban encroachment of Ag land
146 (1 3 2 9) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/drugs
147 (1 3 2 10) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/less wasted timber
148 (1 3 2 11) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/govt subsidies
149 (1 3 2 12) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/more weeds
150 (1 3 2 13) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/farming practices
151 (1 3 2 14) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/societal/business suffer
152 (1 3 3) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/responding to change
153 (1 3 3 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/responding to change/non-comprehension
154 (1 3 3 2) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/responding to change/accept and live with it
155 (1 3 3 3) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/responding to change/embrace and benefit
156 (1 3 3 4) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/responding to change/dis-interest
157 (1 3 3 5) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/responding to change/resistance to change
158 (1 3 7) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/causing change~ events
159 (1 3 7 1) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/causing change~ events/World Heritage
160 (1 3 7 2) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/causing change~ events/WWII
161 (1 3 7 3) /responses to questions/Changes seen~experienced/causing change~ events/'government'
162 (1 4) /responses to questions/comparisons
163 (1 4 1) /responses to questions/comparisons/ability to make
164 (1 4 1 1) /responses to questions/comparisons/ability to make/readily
165 (1 4 1 2) /responses to questions/comparisons/ability to make/limited
166 (1 4 1 3) /responses to questions/comparisons/ability to make/hypothetical
167 (1 4 1 5) /responses to questions/comparisons/ability to make/learning from others
168 (1 4 1 7) /responses to questions/comparisons/ability to make/can't make comparisons
169 (1 4 4) /responses to questions/comparisons/content
170 (1 4 4 1) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/suitable farming country
171 (1 4 4 2) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/climate
172 (1 4 4 3) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/economic sustainability
173 (1 4 4 4) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/community attitude
174 (1 4 4 5) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/conservative
175 (1 4 4 6) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/not multicultural

176 (1 4 4 7) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/simpler, friendlier
177 (1 4 4 8) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/physical geography
178 (1 4 4 9) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/urban~rural
179 (1 4 4 10) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/arts suffer
180 (1 4 4 11) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/aesthetic
181 (1 4 4 12) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/soil
182 (1 4 4 13) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/suitable for timber
183 (1 4 4 14) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/safer
184 (1 4 4 15) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/hard to make friends
185 (1 4 4 16) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/sustainable farming practices
186 (1 4 4 17) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/protection of nature
187 (1 4 4 18) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/opportunity~lack of
188 (1 4 4 19) /responses to questions/comparisons/content/European
189 (1 4 8) /responses to questions/comparisons/scale
190 (1 4 8 1) /responses to questions/comparisons/scale/national
191 (1 4 8 2) /responses to questions/comparisons/scale/within Tablelands
192 (1 4 8 4) /responses to questions/comparisons/scale/international
193 (1 4 8 6) /responses to questions/comparisons/scale/regional
194 (1 5) /responses to questions/Sense of Community
195 (1 5 1) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/low relevance
196 (1 5 2) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/people pull together when have to
197 (1 5 3) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/same all over
198 (1 5 4) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/high relevance
199 (1 5 5) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/positives & negatives
200 (1 5 6) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/achievement of outcomes
201 (1 5 7) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/not covered
202 (1 5 8) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/counter culture
203 (1 5 9) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/creating opportunities for youth
204 (1 5 10) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/human, social capital
205 (1 5 11) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/neighbours
206 (1 5 12) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/medium relevance
207 (1 5 13) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/isolated sub-communities
208 (1 5 14) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/few deep friendships
209 (1 5 14 1) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/few deep friendships/rationale unfriendly
210 (1 5 14 2) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/few deep friendships/rationale we're too busy
211 (1 5 15) /responses to questions/Sense of Community/changes with time
212 (1 6) /responses to questions/self perceived influences
213 (1 6 1) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/It is what I know
214 (1 6 2) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/community
215 (1 6 3) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/access to natural beauty
216 (1 6 4) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/having children here
217 (1 6 5) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/creating a home here
218 (1 6 6) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/professional role
219 (1 6 7) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/not covered
220 (1 6 8) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/local opinions
221 (1 6 9) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/indigenous culture
222 (1 6 10) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/can't answer
223 (1 6 11) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/living here whole life
224 (1 6 12) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/comparisons
225 (1 6 13) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/culture of sharing
226 (1 6 15) /responses to questions/self perceived influences/childhood adventures
227 (1 7) /responses to questions/demographics
228 (2) /What's it all about~
229 (2 1) /What's it all about~/cows
230 (2 2) /What's it all about~/freedom of country

231 (2 3) /What's it all about~/making money
232 (2 4) /What's it all about~/climate
233 (2 5) /What's it all about~/family
234 (2 6) /What's it all about~/core farming identity
235 (2 7) /What's it all about~/access to nature
236 (2 8) /What's it all about~/'human use'
237 (2 9) /What's it all about~/survival
238 (2 10) /What's it all about~/clearing scrub
239 (2 11) /What's it all about~/harmony with nature
240 (2 12) /What's it all about~/tropical highlands
241 (2 13) /What's it all about~/producing food
242 (2 14) /What's it all about~/being on the land
243 (2 15) /What's it all about~/living a full life
244 (2 16) /What's it all about~/engaging with community
245 (2 17) /What's it all about~/not location specific
246 (2 18) /What's it all about~/in awe of nature
247 (3) /other considerations
248 (3 1) /other considerations/familiarity and security
249 (3 2) /other considerations/telling stories
250 (3 3) /other considerations/activity~location continuum
251 (3 3 1) /other considerations/activity~location continuum/location more important
252 (3 3 2) /other considerations/activity~location continuum/activity more important
253 (3 4) /other considerations/aspirations
254 (3 4 1) /other considerations/aspirations/tourism
255 (4) /attitude to environment
256 (4 1) /attitude to environment/dairy country is healthy
257 (4 2) /attitude to environment/eco is unprofitable
258 (4 3) /attitude to environment/nature makes me $
259 (4 4) /attitude to environment/appreciation
260 (4 5) /attitude to environment/humans destroy
261 (4 6) /attitude to environment/nature grows back
262 (4 7) /attitude to environment/worthless scrub
263 (4 8) /attitude to environment/rubbish nature
264 (4 9) /attitude to environment/eco vision
265 (5) /Why do people do what they do~
266 (5 1) /Why do people do what they do~/help conservation if it helps production
267 (5 2) /Why do people do what they do~/utilitarian
268 (5 3) /Why do people do what they do~/aesthetic
269 (5 4) /Why do people do what they do~/hobby
270 (5 5) /Why do people do what they do~/reaction to negativity
271 (5 6) /Why do people do what they do~/link to childhood
272 (5 7) /Why do people do what they do~/we always did it this way
273 (6) /Tom's responses
274 (7) /learning
275 (7 1) /learning/from parents~grandparents
276 (7 2) /learning/develop detailed knowledge
277 (7 3) /learning/from research~extension
278 (7 4) /learning/trial and error
279 (7 5) /learning/from peers
280 (7 6) /learning/from markets
281 (7 7) /learning/Tertiary education
282 (7 7 1) /learning/Tertiary education/low impact
283 (7 7 2) /learning/Tertiary education/large impact
284 (7 8) /learning/observation
285 (7 9) /learning/don't want to learn
286 (7 10) /learning/growing up in place
287 (7 11) /learning/rethinking