

Running head: Farm women

UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL MEANINGS AND
PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTHERN MANITOBA FARM WOMEN'S
STRESS EXPERIENCES

SIMONE MARIE JEANNETTE REINSCH

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master in Nursing

Faculty of Nursing

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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BY

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**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of
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ABSTRACT

Stress is a pervasive issue that can potentially affect health and productivity. There is evidence to suggest that farm women are particularly susceptible to the effects of stress. The overall purpose of the study was to arrive at an increased understanding of the underlying cultural knowledge and meaning of Manitoba farm women's stress experiences. Situated in Social Critical Theory, the study's conceptual framework was guided by Socialist Feminist Theory (SFT). Qualitative ethnographic face-to-face interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of eight farm women whose livelihood was affected by Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE). The ethnographic central theme describes the aggregate as women who struggle to balance the sense of self in a patriarchal context, while struggling to survive the micro and macro changing times in agriculture following the BSE outbreak. The central theme is supported by four taxonomies. The study has shown that the root causes of the aggregate's culturally defined stress experience are situated in the socio-economic-political changing times in the agricultural industry at the local, national, and global levels. As such, all levels of government should adopt the Population Health Promotion approach to policy development. Future research includes the exploration of the long-term impacts and implication of crisis situations on farm men and women in various farming operations both provincially and nationally, and exploring the importance of home to farm women's well-being.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my husband Richard,

AND

My three daughters:

Arianne, Josee, & Emma

'Learning is a life long journey'

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, PURPOSE, AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The contents of this chapter will include a brief statement of the problem, research purpose, research question, definition of key terms, foundational assumptions, and the significance of the study.

Statement of the Problem

Stress is a pervasive issue that can potentially affect all aspects of society but specifically it may affect health and productivity (Lobley, Johnson & Reed, 2004; Lyon, 2000). There is evidence to suggest that farm women in particular may be especially susceptible to the effects of stress (Kubik & Moore, 2001; Walker & Walker, 1988).

A landmark Manitoba study by Walker and Walker (1988) found that farm women reported a higher level of symptoms commonly associated with stress in comparison to farm men. As well, an Alberta study of farm stress involving farm men and women found that predictors of stress may be gender, and environment specific (Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin, & Rose, 2003). The reason for these differences remains unclear. Little is known about how Canadian farm women perceive, define and live with stress. A paucity of Canadian stress research initiatives focusing specifically on vulnerable women and, to a greater extent, farm women, is apparent.

The study aimed to broaden the knowledge of the unique cultural attributes that shape women's stress experiences on the farm. Guided by socialist feminist theory, farm women's testimonies, as experts of their lived realities of

stress, was central to the study. A qualitative study using a mini-ethnographic research design captured the cultural meanings of how women think, believe, and behave within the current farming context.

Research Purpose

The overall purpose of this ethnographic inquiry was to arrive at an increased understanding of the underlying cultural knowledge and meaning of the stress experiences of farm women who live in Manitoba. Using the lens of the feminist perspective, the study focused on women's 'lived through' and felt stress experiences on the farm.

Research Question

The researcher sought to discover and understand answers to a broad and central question. What cultural knowledge guided Manitoba farm women in conceptualizing their stress experiences?

Definition of Key Terms

Creswell (2003) suggests that because of the inductive and evolving nature of a qualitative study, key terms should be tentatively defined (Creswell, 2003). In fact, Creswell (2003) suggests themes that evolve, and emerge through the data analysis should define the phenomenon under study. This approach necessitates that definition of terms should be delayed until entry into the field setting.

However, words in every day language have multiple meanings.

For the sake of precision and uniformity of meaning, keywords were defined and grounded in the literature. Keywords include: *culture, farm, farm woman, and stress.*

Culture, the central phenomenon of study was defined as the patterns of behaviour and beliefs that shape the daily lives of people over a representative period of time or at a given moment (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Farm according to Statistics Canada (2001) was defined as an agricultural operation that produces a product (crops, livestock, poultry, green house or nursery products, mushrooms, sod, honey, ample syrup products, Christmas trees) intended for sale.

Farm woman was defined as a woman who operates a farm and or is married to a farm operator, regardless of age (Statistic Canada, 1999). A farm operator is a person responsible for the day-to-day management decisions while operating a farm (Statistic Canada, 1999).

Stress was broadly defined using Seyle's (1976) definition. According to Seyle (1976) *stress* was a threat to a person's well-being. Definitions for stress, and stress experience emerged through data analysis.

Assumptions

The identification of personal assumptions is a reflexive activity that is meant to control personal bias from potentially infiltrating the research findings (Speziale, 2003). The following assumptions are presented to ensure confirmability of the research findings.

The researcher's lived realities of farm life and the synthesis of a comprehensive literature review have provided the foundation for the following assumptions:

1. The farm 'way-of-life' reality is patriarchal, oppressive, and exploitive of women's labour.
2. Farm women are experts of their own experiences with stress. Their experiences as human beings are valid and must be understood.
3. Farm women's stress experiences cannot be understood by eviscerating the parts from the whole
4. A guided and photovoice-based interview may provide the pathway to access women's ideas, thoughts, and stories about their stress experiences.
5. Farm women's stress experiences may be caused by the interplay of many factors outside the individual's control (determinants).

Significance of the study

According to Creswell (2003) significance refers to the rationale of the study for the select audience. The study has significance for farm women, service providers, policy makers, researchers and educators.

This study is important to farm women in Manitoba because their lived experiences of stress had not been documented using a qualitative design. The research legitimized women's stress experiences, and raised consciousness of what was normally hidden. Raising awareness may be instrumental to empowerment education for the farm women who participated in this study. In so doing, these farm women will have a stronger voice to influence their social, cultural, and political situations on the farm, and in their communities.

Knowledge gleaned from the study will assist the staff of the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line (MFRSL) in meeting the specific priority needs of

farm women. Rural and farm women have expressed a desire to have cultural sensitive programming (Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence, 2003). However, there is a paucity of literature on what that actually means. Findings from this study will enlighten health service providers such as rural family physicians and public health nurses, and other service providers (i.e. church, and other community groups) to provide services that meet the needs of farm women. Knowledge and understanding of the aggregate's needs may facilitate health promotion strategies within a primary health model.

The researcher hopes the findings from this study may influence policy makers. In the past, stress had been viewed through a narrow biomedical lens. The stress experience and subsequent health and behaviour problems have been viewed as an individual's failure to cope. It is hoped that this study will enlighten the policy makers to understand how the determinants of health play a role in the development of stress at the aggregate level. The knowledge gleaned may also equip women's groups such as the Prairie Women's Centre for Excellence (PWHCE), and the Manitoba Women's Institute (MWI) with essential information to speak on behalf of farm women in relation to 'upstream' policy development.

Lastly, new insights emerging from this study may help to guide researchers and educators concerned with advancing the development, and knowledge translation of farm women's cultural experiences of stress.

Summary

There is evidence to suggest that farm women may be particularly vulnerable to the effects of stress. However, the available literature did not explicate the reasons for this phenomenon. The researcher's personal and literature based reflexive assumptions were identified. The assumptions provided the foundation for the development of the research purpose and question. Key concept terms were defined. The rationale for the study was given. The study is expected to benefit farm women and other key stakeholders. The following chapter will present a review of the literature.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A literature review was undertaken to inform, focus, and identify gaps in the area of the proposed qualitative study (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). An extensive search was done using different search words including: farm woman, stress, and Canada. The reviewed literature was narrowed to include primarily Canadian sources of any date, and recent research from other countries during a fifteen year period beginning in 1990 until 2005.

A computer generated literature search including CINHALL, MEDLINE, and GOOGLE SCHOLAR was conducted and revealed diverse disciplinary (medicine, social work, sociology, psychology) approaches to the study of stress within rural and farm individuals and families. The quality and integrity of online resources was evaluated according to the guidelines outlined in Berg (2004). Various online Canadian federal and provincial health and statistical government documents, and current provincial and local newspaper articles were accessed. Manual retrieval of dated Canadian literature including books, periodicals, and smaller agency publications was also conducted.

In addition, as part of a Community Health Course Practicum, some insights were obtained through informal interviews with key informants from specific agencies, and rural women's groups. The Director and staff of the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line, the President of the Manitoba Women's Institute, the Director of the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence in Winnipeg, a Home Economist with the Southwest Farm Women's Network, a

Family Living Specialist with the Department of Agriculture, the Chief Officer of Health for the Regional Health Authority-Central Region, and the past President of the Keystone Agricultural Producers were interviewed. The literature review and key informant interviews provided an overview of the experiences of farm women and stress. The areas specifically addressed in this literature review include: stress theories, rural context, profile of farm women, and farm women and the stress experience.

Review of Stress Theories

Stress literature abounds within various disciplines (medicine, psychology, nursing, and sociology). However it remains a broad, ill-defined, and evolving concept that is frequently used by laypeople, professionals, and academics alike. The two main influential approaches to stress research are response and stimulus based models (Bailey & Clarke, 1989). A review of the most influential stress theories (Table 1) informed the researcher's own interpretation and understanding of stress.

Although not an illness in itself, stress has been perceived as a factor that may precipitate and aggravate disease (American Psychiatric Association, 2004). Seyle's (1956) definition of stress (Table I, p. 19) clearly represents a biomedical illness-based approach to the study of stress. In his operational definition, it is assumed that a universal and patterned response for all stressors will occur regardless of the nature of the stressor, the individual's adaptive abilities, and social context (Seyle, 1976). Identification of the individual's physiological manifestations of stress remains at the core of this theory.

The authors of the Transactional Stress Theory (TST) expanded the stress definition (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) indicate that the basis for TST involves an interaction between the demands placed on the person, their appraisal of an event, and subsequent ability to cope. Stress is seen as a subjective experience. Ineffective coping results in psychological stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This view of stress assumes the individual as being responsible for ineffective coping, which may result in victim-blaming (Cornish & Gerrard, 1995).

Aneshensel (1992) when developing the Social Stress Theory, took into consideration the impacts of socio-economic class and the development of individual stress. Although the Social Stress Theory presents a broader context of people's lives as a potential stressor the theory still focuses on the individual's capacity to cope within their environment (Lobley, Johnson & Reed, 2004). The reviewed stress theories showed varying definitions of stress. Differing definitions of stress and subjective nature of the stress experience added a challenging dimension to the interpretation and comparison of stress research. The implied nuances when comparing the different models were difficult to discern. However, recurrent themes were identifiable. The themes included: a host; a force; processes; a stress response; and a consequence of the response (Table II). The main stress themes provided the foundation for the identification of domains while in the field, and during the preliminary data analysis (Appendix O).

Table I: *Stress Theories*

Stress theory	Description
<p>Hans Seyle (1956, 1976, 1993) General Adaptation Syndrome: Nervous and endocrine systems are the masterminds of the body's stress response. Failure and/or exhaustion of the systems may result in disease (Seyle, 1956).</p>	<p>Operational definition: "the state of stress by the measurable manifestation of the stress syndrome" (Seyle 1976, p. 64) Stress definition: "the nonspecific (that is common) result of any demand upon the body, be the effect mental or somatic" (Seyle, 1993, p.7)</p>
<p>Lazarus & Folkman (1984) Transactional Stress Theory (TST): The response is a subjective phenomenon influenced by cognitive appraisal (threat, harm, and challenges), emotions, and coping responses</p>	<p>Stress definition: "a rubric consisting of many variable and processes" (p.12). Stressors may include: daily hassles, major changes affecting one or few persons Psychological stress occurs when coping fails.</p>
<p>Aneshensel, 1992 Social Stress Theory: a state of arousal resulting either from the presence of socio-environmental demands that tax the individual's ordinary adaptive capacity</p>	<p>Stress definition: "Discrepancies between those conditions and characteristics of the individual his needs, values , perception, resource and skills"(p. 16).</p>

Table 11: *The stress concept—Foundation to domain identification*

Host	Forces	Processes	Stress Responses	Consequences of response
Biologic Genetic Gender Age Education Reactivity Nutrition Fitness Level Health Status	Internal External Determinants of health	Appraisal/Perception Coping/Adaptation	Stabilizing Emotions Physical	Cognitive Physical Behavioral Disease

Consistently, throughout the diverse theories, the individual is central to the discussion. Patterns of commonalities within and between groups or aggregates have not been identified. Gerrard (2000b) believes that the determinants of health were in part responsible for the development of stress on the farm in Saskatchewan. Determinants are factors outside the health care system that contribute to the health of a population (Hamilton & Bhatti, 1996). Determinants include the social, economic, and political context in which people live. In such, alleviation, and/or reduction of stress may need to have a broader aggregate level focus. Context appears to be crucial in understanding the farm stress experience. This broad view of the stress experience is not explicated within the current stress theories and thus provided the basis for Assumption 5.

Rural Context

Rural and farm populations share common and unique characteristics even though the term rural has variable meanings. The choice of definition depends on the policy and geographic issues being addressed (Mitura & Bollman, 2003). In Canada, there is a lack of consensus in defining 'rural'. Statistics Canada defines 'census rural' as those areas that have less than 1000 people living within a population density of less than 400 people per square kilometre (du Plessis, et al., 2001).

duPlessis, Behiri, Bollman and Clemenson (2001) identify six definitions of rural. Definitions may be based on the census rural area, rural and small town (RST), the organization of economic co-operation and development (OECD) of rural communities, the non-metropolitan regions (Beale Code approach), and rural postal codes. These authors suggest that the selection of a rural definition may have an impact on research results, policy development and application, program administration, and fund distribution. Ryan-Nicholls and Racher (2004) clearly articulate the importance of defining rural accurately in order to appropriately discuss health of rural communities. The lack of a consensus in defining rural among researchers is a critical issue in research as it makes comparisons of existing findings a challenge (Ryan-Nicholls & Racher, 2004).

In Manitoba and across Canada the number of farms has decreased in number while rural and small town populations have increased (Racher, 2001). Statistics Canada (2005) reports the number of farms has decreased by 13.6 %, and as a result the farming population has decreased by 14.7%. Agriculture is a

primary industry providing income and employment for many rural and urban dwellers (Government of Manitoba, 2004). Farming areas are characterized by lower population density, greater spatial distances between people and services, economic orientation to land and nature, and work and recreational activities that are seasonal in nature (Bushy, 1994). The setting for the study was Manitoba farms.

Profile of the Farm Woman

According to Statistics Canada (2005) farm women represent approximately 1/5 of the total Manitoba female population. In absolute numbers, there are approximately 20,000 Manitoba women aged 18 and over who are farm residents, and/or derive farm based income. However, the exact number may be even higher, as many farm women identify themselves by their professional and role designation rather than as a farmer. The present day Canadian farm women is likely to be between the ages of 35-54 (Statistics Canada, 2004), married with children, have off-farm paid employment, have a high level of education in comparison to their spouse, and are less likely than in the past to participate in rural women's networking organizations (Martz & Brueckner, 2003; Statistics Canada, 2005b).

Statistical analyses of Manitoba Farm & Rural Stress Line (MFRSL) (2003) calls revealed a 195% increase in call volume since the program's 2001 inception. Within the past two years the majority of callers have been rural women between the ages of 51-64 followed by ages 36-50 years. Rural women below the age of 36 are having the least contact with the MFRSL even though the

literature suggests younger women are at higher risk for experiencing elevated levels of stress symptoms (Walker & Walker, 1987). The problems identified by the stress line callers included: anxiety, isolation, medical and mental health issues, followed by relationship, financial concerns, and depression. Statistics of the problem areas do not differentiate between male and female, and rural and farm residents. As a result, the extent and nature of issues facing farm women was not accurately identified.

Rural and farm women share common experiences and characteristics. Some characteristics, however, are unique to people who farm. The ensuing discussion is intended to situate the farm woman aggregate within a broader social, cultural, environmental, economic, and political context. The specific social location of the knower is important to research because how one 'acts and knows' is always dependent on social structures or context (Ardovini-Brooker, 2002). Context is defined as diverse elements that "influence the behaviour and beliefs of individuals" (Kleinman, 1992, p.19). The interpretation of context "shapes what is known and what is not known" (Ardovini-Brooker, 2002, p. 4). Specifically health concerns, socio-cultural values and beliefs, functional capacity, farm families, farming, economic sustainability, and agricultural government policies will be presented.

Health Concerns

Once considered idyllic and peaceful, the realities of rural Canada show a different image (Jennissen, 1992). Jennissen (1992) identified availability and access to quality health care in rural areas and the difficulties of meeting the needs

of women, children, youth, disabled persons, immigrants, elderly people, and certain groups (farmers, Aboriginal peoples, and fishermen) were prominent health issues in rural Canada. Specifically, there was increasing evidence that rural communities were facing demographic, ecological, economic, and social problems due to geographic isolation, depletion of natural resources, chronic high unemployment, depopulation and aging population, as well as environmental decay (Pitblado, et al., 1999). The Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence (PWHCE) (2003) indicates women in rural and remote areas were currently more likely to be: isolated, poor, and unemployed; and to die accidentally (motor vehicle accident [MVA], poisonings, and suicide) or from disease (cancer and diabetes) as compared to their urban counterparts.

Considerable urban/rural differences in health status, behaviour, and service use have been identified (Pitblado, et al., 1999). Rural (male and female) populations have shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality rates, fewer physician contacts, and have a preference for institutionalized care (Pitblado, et al., 1999). Mitura and Bollman (2003) noted that residents of rural and northern regions were less likely to rate their health as very good to excellent in comparison to the national average. Such was the case with rural and farm women across the Canadian prairies (Donner, 2001; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Roberts & Falk, 2004; Thurston & Meadows, 2003).

Rural depopulation leading to fewer social supports and regionalization of health services (Kubik & Moore, 2001; Roberts & Falk, 2002) were having deleterious effects on women's well-being. Roberts and Falk (2002) found South-

eastern Manitoba women often lack knowledge and information, and have difficulty with communication in what is perceived as an insensitive, inflexible, and inaccessible health system. In fact, rural and farm women felt the health care system organization did not benefit rural women (Roberts & Falk, 2002; Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin, & Vollman, 2003). Quality care, accessibility (distance and travelling), and availability of cultural and gender specific services were recurrent farm and rural health care concerns (Kubik & Moore, 2001; PWHCE, 2003). Gerrard (2000b) indicates rural community, and health care systems may impair (lack of privacy, and confidentiality), and enhance resiliency (long term friendships, informal and formal supports).

The PWHCE (2003), the Manitoba Women's Institute (Manitoba Agriculture & Food, 2001), the Saskatchewan Women's Agricultural Network (Gerrard & Russell, 2004), and the Southwest Farm Women's Network (Manitoba Agriculture & Food, 2003) concur that formal and informal support systems for women in rural communities were dwindling. Effects specific to the erosion of formal support programs may lead to women feeling unsupported, invisible, voiceless, isolated, angry, and ineffective in their many roles (Gerrard & Russell, 1999).

Socio-Cultural Values and Beliefs

American farm women have unique ways of understanding health, which may have affected their health and health seeking behaviours (Long, 1993). American literature points to distinctive rural socio-cultural values and beliefs including: slower changing traditional cultural values, preference of informal

supports such as family, friends, and community members, reluctance and distrust to seek help from others, and a preference to interact with known people who share similar views (Bushy, 1990). There is evidence to suggest that Saskatchewan farm residents shared similar values and beliefs (Gerrard, 2000).

Results of a qualitative farm stress community assessment of Saskatchewan farmers and service providers found participants have a strong sense of individualism (Gerrard, 2000). Individualism was defined as the tendency to internalize and assume responsibility for problems (Gerrard, 2000). Participants identified a distrust of governments, and service providers. The way-of-life' was seen as being paternalistic, where females were the least empowered in a male dominated culture. Participants were noted as having a strong sense of living for the future. Gerrard (2000) aptly referred, to this characteristic, as "a religion of hope" (p. 92). The author did not specify the gender of the farmers interviewed therefore it is impossible to generalize the results to women.

While doing a resiliency study in Saskatchewan, Gerrard (2000b) found that rural gender barriers such as sex-role stereotypes, lack of opportunities for women, traditional male/female roles, lack of communication opportunities, and 'gender politics' were obstacles faced by women in farming. One Saskatchewan farm women was quoted as saying "The agricultural sector walks like a man, talks like a man and is a man in every way" (Gerrard & Russell, 1999, p. 5). This quote clearly illustrates the 'felt' patriarchy in farming.

In the Canadian prairie provinces, rural and farm women have defined health more holistically (physical, mental, spiritual, and social aspects) than their

American counterparts (PWCHE, 2003; Roberts & Falk, 2002; Thurston & Meadows, 2003; Thomlinson, McDonagh, & Crooks, 2004). South-eastern Manitoba women defined health as an important life priority (Roberts & Falk, 2004). Farm women in the prairie provinces usually sought health care during the farming off-seasons, placed the health of their families first, and potentially sacrificed their own health needs in the process (Kubik & Moore, 2001; Roberts & Falk, 2004). Farming peoples have been perceived as having little tolerance for 'weak minds', and as a result, the stigma attached to mental health issues has been particularly severe (Gerrard, 2000; Roberts & Falk, 2004). Silence and secrecy associated with mental health may explain why mental health issues were a high priority need for women in South-eastern Manitoba. The mental health stigma did not present problems in recruitment for this study.

PWCHE (2003) on the one hand suggests Canadian women were not culturally motivated, but desire culturally sensitive programming. On the other hand, Roberts and Falk (2004) suggest that results of 21 focus groups in South-eastern Manitoba show women wanted health services in their own language, "with people who understand our roots, where we are coming from" (p. 39). The effects of culture on decision making were unclear. It is important to note, however, that women whether American or Canadian were not culturally homogenous and caution must be exercised in generalizing the results of these studies (Ironstone-Catterall, et al., 1998).

Functional Role Capacity

The literature points to the learning, juggling, and balancing of roles as challenging, and stressful for farm and rural women. Traditional dominated farm women work, roles and expectations have changed (Martz & Brueckner, 2003; McGhee, 1983; van de Vorst, 2002) and may be intensifying (Kubik & Moore, 2001; Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin, & Rose, 2003). Role overload characterized by an overwhelming burden of work (Jaffe & Blakley, 2000; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Roberts & Falk, 2004); and role conflict arising within an individual as traditional and new roles clash (Walker Schubert & Walker, 1987) have been researched and found to possibly contribute to the challenges associated with farm life. Role incongruence defined as spousal disagreements over the wife's role on the farm has not been addressed within a Canadian context.

Farm Families

Families who farm together have unique characteristics (Rosenblatt & Anderson, 1981). Parents and adult children must work collectively to deal with intensive seasonal workloads, variable and unstable incomes, huge cash farm investments, hazardous work environments, and the relative psychological and geographical isolation from supports and services (Rosenblatt & Anderson, 1981). Rosenblatt and Anderson (1981) found that farm families also have limited leisure time. There is scant Canadian literature revealing the exact nature, and dynamic of farm families. However, Gerrard (2000b) found that Saskatchewan farm families may have conflicting effects on farm women's resiliency. On the one hand, farm families may be a source of stress if family members are unsupportive,

have high expectations, betray trust, and become ill (Gerrard, 2000b). Such may be the case especially for daughter-in-laws on a family farm (Gerrard, 2000b). On the other hand, family can be a safe place, where one can express worries in a supportive atmosphere.

Farming

The nature of farming is considered one of the most hazardous and stressful occupations in the industrialized world (Guilfoyle, 1992; Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin, & Vollman, 2004). Although, men have higher rates of agricultural injuries and fatalities, women have a higher incidence of animal-care related injuries (The Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP), 2003). The farm is an environment where men, women, and their children are exposed to an overwhelming number of controllable and uncontrollable factors contributing to workplace and safety issues (Guilfoyle, 1992). These factors include the type and size of farm, the possibility of farming injuries, availability and quality of farm employees, and anxiety resulting from the many uncontrollable factors (Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin, & Rose, 2003). Furthermore, the farm is a workplace and residence to many farm families which increases the chances of hazardous exposure for the entire family (Guilfoyle, 1992).

The environmental concerns identified above are unique to farm women and their families (PWHCE, 2003). A study using cross-sectional data from the Ontario Farm Family Health Study was used to investigate the perceived levels of stress, farm injuries and their interrelationship in 2,946 farm couples (Simpson,

Sebastian, Arbuckle, Bancej, & Pickett, 2004). Results indicate that risk of injury increased as the levels of stress increased for both sexes. Working off the farm seemed to provide a protective effect against farming injuries for both men and women but especially for women (Simpson, et al., 2004). Off-farm work may simply be a reflection of reduced exposure time to the various environmental hazards rather than a reduction in stress levels.

Although, working off the farm may reduce farm related injuries, Beaujot (2004) would argue whether this would also reduce stress levels. In a quantitative study using data from the 1998 Statistic Canada General Social Survey on Time Use, Beaujot (2004) found that being overly busy caused high levels of stress no matter what type of work was being done. The effects of paid and unpaid work were additive rather than multiplicative in nature. Furthermore, the type of work was inconsequential, but it was the amount of work time that mattered the most (Beaujot, 2004). Although Beaujot's (2004) study participants included rural and urban populations, a comparison can be made between the two studies since the age of the participants were similar to farm participants in Simpson et al.'s study (2004).

Economic Sustainability

Farming is a 'way of life'. The cyclic economic 'downturns and upturns' is a way-of-life in farming (van de Vorst, 2002). The economic downturn experienced in the 1970's and 1980's caused a farming crisis (van de Vorst, 2002). The crisis resulted from rising interest rates, high production inputs, and low farm commodity prices. As a result, many Canadian farm families

experienced economic distress and severe cash-flow problems. It is within this context that the majority of the American and Canadian farm stress literature came to light.

The economic problems in farming persist currently. In Manitoba, the provincial newspaper provided current information on the farming state of affairs. Weather, mad cow disease, and numerous related international issues were but a few of the uncontrollable factors facing farmers currently (Hinsburg, 2004; Janzen, 2005; MacAfee, 2004; Paul, 2005; Redekop, 2004). The pervasive effects of economic instability have been discussed as one of the major contributing factors to the development of stress in Manitoba women (Donner, 2000), farm men, and especially in farm and rural women (Gordon & Plain, 1995; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Walker Schubert & Walker, 1987). The way-of-life is increasingly challenging, and is presently being viewed as a potential barrier as well as an enhancer of resiliency (Gerrard, 2000b).

In the past, farm women have economized to 'make ends meet' (van de Vorst, 2002). Gordon and Plain's (1995) qualitative in-depth interviews with five married Saskatchewan farm wives with children experiencing stress as a result of economic crisis in Canadian agriculture, found that farm wives were powerless, and afraid of losing their way-of-life. Women felt misunderstood by the government, public, financial institutions and large corporations. As well, women felt unsupported by their community and their service providers.

Gerrard (2000) suggests that when faced with financial difficulties farm women tended to ignore their own needs because the 'farm comes first'. This

finding is also reflected in the stories and autobiographies of one hundred and thirty Manitoba farm women and men (van de Vorst, 2002). During the period of 1870-1990, van de Vorst (2002) found that in times of economic hardship, farm wives “work harder to maintain the same standard of living... they function as a buffer against the initial shock of an economic crisis” (van de Vorst, 2002, p. 2). Currently, van de Vorst (2002) suggests that working off the farm for women is a means of sustaining the economic feasibility of the farm. However, working off the farm may contribute to the overwhelming burden of work and stress on the farm (Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin, & Rose, 2003).

Agricultural Government Policies

The sustainability of North American agriculture has come under government scrutiny in the past few years (Lind, 1995). Canadian government farm statistics indicate farm debt to asset ratio, and revenues have not significantly improved since the 1980's (Canadian Federation of Agriculture, 2004). These macro level agricultural problems may be difficult to deal with. In fact, Meyer and Lobao (2003) found when studying 800 farm men and women who had experienced the 1980's American Midwestern farm crisis that agricultural macro level changes are impossible to deal with at the micro (individual) level. These authors noted that traditional coping techniques such as denial, support seeking, comparing oneself to others, having a plan, and hoping for a miracle actually exacerbated the stress experiences of the participants in the study.

Other issues in the political arena have surfaced. Saskatchewan farm residents claim politicians are out of touch with the people. Study participants questioned the relevancy and appropriateness of policy decisions (Gerrard, 2000; Kubik & Moore, 2001). Paternalistic government subsidies rather than fair market prices for farm products may have affected farmers self worth (Gordon & Plain, 1995). Problems with government bureaucracies are a recurrent theme among several farm stress studies (Gerrard, 2000; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Walker Schubert & Walker, 1987). As a result, self-esteem, coping, and the ability to bounce back from adversity may be compromised.

Farm Women and the Stress Experience

The literature consistently reveals higher stress symptom levels among Canadian, American, and European farm women in comparison to their male farming counterparts (Booth, 2000; Brown, 1998; Dreary, Willock & McGregor, 1997, Walker & Walker, 1987). Kubik and Moore (2001) found that 37% of Saskatchewan farm wives report feeling somewhat stressed and those experiencing high levels of stress (28%) tended to be under the age of forty. The main stressor was related to the financial burden of farming. The economic burden was found to negatively impact the physical and psychological health (stress and overwork) of women (Kubik & Moore, 2001). Physical symptoms most often associated with stress included: sleep disturbances, lack of energy, headaches, gastrointestinal problems (weight gain or loss), respiratory problems, and elevated blood pressure (Kubik & Moore, 2001). Cognitive problems included inability to concentrate, forgetfulness, procrastination and difficulty

making decisions. Behaviourally, problems included an increase in arguments, gambling, marital problems, and substance abuse (Kubik & Moore, 2001).

Kubik and Moore's (2001) findings are similar to Walker and Walker's (1987-88) study findings. In this study, researchers used an adapted version of the Hopkins Symptom and Health Problems checklist with responses recorded on a five point Likert scale to measure the extent of the stress response. The self reported stress symptoms score for farm women was significantly higher than that for farm men, and urban women, especially for women age 50 and less. Stress symptoms included: trouble concentrating, sleep disruptions, increase in family conflict, and changes in health, back pain, or loss of temper. As well, Walker and Walker (1988) found that women involved in the farm business seemed to experience more stress symptoms as compared to those who were not involved.

Results of a quantitative, non-clinical random South Central Alberta study of farming men and women using a mail survey (Farm Family Survey, The Canadian Health Promotion Survey, and Alberta Cancer Board Survey) indicated no significant gender differences in stress levels. Female participants reported remembering farm accidents, having larger sized farms, and having few family members working on the farm as stress predictors when age, health status and worrying about the effects of farming on their health were included in the multivariate analysis logistic regression model. Male participants reported the perception of farming as a dangerous occupation, and the lack of qualified employees were predictors of stress when age, health status and worrying about the effects of farming on their health were included in the model. Walker &

Walker's (1987) Manitoba study of 808 farm men and women found women were particularly vulnerable to specific stressors. The overwhelming workload, lack of leisure time, spousal and family conflict, financial concerns, geographical or personal isolation, political issues, and government regulations led to the development of stress for farm women in Manitoba.

The farm stress studies described above clearly demonstrate the two main focuses of stress research (stimulus based, and response based) (Bailey & Clarke, 1989). The farm stress literature has provided a synthesis of women's stress symptoms and predictors. Women appear to experience farm stress differently than their male counterparts. The predictors of stress appear to be context specific. A contextual exploration at the aggregate level may provide insights into farm women's stress experiences.

Limitations of the Literature

The literature review has provided a good portrayal of farm women. However, upon completion of the review a number of gaps were identified. The farm stress literature revealed diverse disciplinary approaches to the study of farm stress although Canadian nursing has not done any work in this field. The bulk of the findings are dated (1980-1995), situated in the United States, where men and farm families were the primary focus of inquiry. The American literature may not provide an accurate portrayal of the present day Canadian farming women's reality. The Canadian farm based literature remains in its infancy stage of development, although a Saskatchewan research initiative (Gerrard, 2000b) is being regarded as influential in the field of farm stress in Canada and abroad. The

landmark Manitoba farm stress study by Walker and Walker (1988) is over fifteen years old. Given the ever changing farming context at the political and environmental level these results may no longer be an accurate reflection of the current stress levels of Manitoba women.

Farm stress has been measured using a variety of quantitative scales that attempt to quantify symptoms and predictors of stress. In an attempt to understand farm stress, farm people have participated in a number of mail-out and telephone surveys, and completed various stress questionnaires. As such, stress has been categorized within very specific biomedical boundaries. The over-reliance on quantitative studies, although informative in nature, has led researchers to focus on the cause, predictors, and effects of stress. As a result, the source of stress is situated in the individual. The biomedical focus fails to provide and take into consideration the interplay of health determinants that may be associated with the reality of farm women's experiences with stress.

Qualitative farm stress studies are rare. However, in preparation for a Manitoba farm stress study a qualitative study by Walker, et al. (1986) using in-depth interviews with the aim of developing a farm stress questionnaire was conducted with 140 farmers and their spouses. The spouses were interviewed together. Given the paternalistic nature of farming, the author questions how effective women were in voicing their concerns while their spouse was present. Whose voice was heard, and how did this impact the subsequent questionnaire development? Therefore, the higher levels of stress symptoms in farm women as

reported by Walker and Walker (1988) may not accurately represent women's stress experiences.

Furthermore, women may be more apt than men to express their stress concerns. McQuaid (2001) found Prince Edward Island farm women were more likely than males to express stress concerns. Male and female biological differences may also be contributing to differences in stress responses (Motzer Adams & Hertig, 2004). Finally, little is known about the aggregates capacities to deal with stress in the current day farming crisis. The paucity of evidence about farm women's capacity to effectively mediate potential stressors in order to maintain health, and enhance coping thereby preventing a stress response, and consequences of the stress response from occurring is apparent. The farm women's lived experiences in relation to how stress is viewed, defined, understood, experienced, and dealt with on a day-to-day basis has not been addressed.

Summary

A comprehensive literature review and key informant interviews provided an overview of women's contextual experiences on the farm. Stress and rural are concepts that have contested definitions. The reviewed stress theories have a narrow biomedical focus that may result in victim-blaming when physiological, psychological, or behavioural manifestations arise. The rural contexts, along with various social, cultural, political, and economic factors are determinants outside the health care system that may affect the lived realities of farm women. There was a paucity of evidence about how Manitoba farm women perceive, define, and

live with stress on a daily basis. The following chapter will define the conceptual framework used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Socialist Feminist Theory is the feminist epistemology that guided and provided the means to analyse the realities of women's lives. The next sections will provide an overview of the theory, and the rationale for the theory selection.

Socialist Feminist Theory

Feminism is a world view that values women and "confronts systemic injustices based on gender" (Chinn & Eldridge Wheeler, 1985, p.84). Feminism challenges patriarchal systems, critiques the dominant male views and focuses on creating self-love and respect among women (Chinn & Elridge Wheeler, 1985).

Socialist Feminist Theory is based on several assumptions about women's lives. Firstly, women are responsible for the maintenance of everyday life (Ardonovi-Brooker, 2002). Secondly, women are 'expert knowers' of their own experiences. Thirdly, feminist theory "assumes that systems of privilege are less visible to those who benefit the most and who control the resources that define the dominant cultural beliefs" (Ardonovi-Brooker, 2002, p.4). To survive, the less powerful groups must be attuned to the culture of the dominant group. Thus, members of the oppressed group have in-depth understanding of both social realities (the dominant culture, and the oppressed). However, this standpoint may only emerge through experiences that raise consciousness (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). The research provided women with this opportunity.

Socialist Feminist Theory based its assumptions on an analysis of cultural institutions and class structures that may play a role in the oppression of women

(Chinn & Eldridge Wheeler, 1995). These cultural institutions may include patriarchal family, motherhood, housework, socio-economics, paid and unpaid work, and consumerism (Chinn & Eldridge Wheeler, 1995). Fundamentally, socialist feminist theory espouses that oppression is generally as a result of capitalism (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

Rationale for Theory Selection

The socialist feminist theory was selected primarily because it placed women's knowledge as central to understanding women's ways of knowing and understanding reality (Ardonovi-Brooker, 2002). In so doing, farm women's stress experiences may be understood within their socio-cultural realities.

Secondly, critical reflection of women's everyday ordinary and extraordinary events in their lives is necessary to raise consciousness of their experiences. Raising consciousness may be defined as "providing explanations, for women, of social phenomena that affect their lives so that they can understand themselves and our gendered world better" (Ardonovi-Brooker, 2002, p. 7). Raising consciousness may positively contribute to women's empowerment. Thus, the personal becomes political because it brings the gendered division of labour (affairs of everyday life) to the forefront.

Finally, feminist theory was selected because it reflects an ethic of respect, caring and collaboration (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Farm women are a group of individuals who have learned to survive in a male dominated culture. They are invisible and voiceless within a patriarchal farming culture. As members of an oppressed group, farm women may lack awareness of their own culture, have a

male dominated deeply ingrained value system, and may feel powerless to effect a positive change (Gerrard, 2000; Gordon & Plain, 1995). Listening to farm women's stories of their stress experiences may "seek to unmake the web of oppressions and reweave the web of life" (Ardovini-Brooker, 2002).

Summary

Socialist feminist theory provided a conceptual framework that brought women's 'ways of knowing' of the realities of daily life to the forefront. Farm women, an oppressed group within a traditional patriarchal society, shared their experiences as 'expert knowers'. A broad, in-depth cultural understanding of women's daily stress experiences brought out what was hidden from their consciousness. Raising consciousness and legitimatizing the stress experience contributed to women's empowerment. In turn, farm women may have a stronger voice to influence their social, cultural and political situations. The next chapter will present the research design and method.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN and METHOD

A mini-focused ethnographic feminist approach was selected to explore the phenomenon under question. The rationale for the selection of this guiding theoretical approach will be addressed. The strategies and rationales involved in sampling, recruitment, data collection and management, and data analysis processes will be discussed. Ethical considerations and the processes that ensured rigor in the research are presented.

Research Design

A qualitative approach was selected, and was well suited for a cultural inquiry. Berg (2004) suggests that the qualitative approach “properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings” (p. 7). The techniques associated with the approach assisted the researcher to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg, 2004). According to Reinharz (1992) qualitative research methods are valuable in guiding feminist research as it provides a safe forum whereby women can explore their every day lived experiences within a broad social, economic, and political arena. The method selected has been used with success in the study of various women’s issues (Reinharz, 1992).

Ethnography

Broadly defined, ethnography is “writing about groups of people” (LeCompte and Shensul 1999, p. 21). The exact meaning of ethnography remains fraught with disagreement; (Berg, 2004) however; there is consistency about the

product of ethnography. Overall, ethnography touts to provide important information about the meaning, organization, and interpretation of culture (Speziale, 2003). Specifically, ethnography provides “explanations of how people think, believe and behave” in a specific context (time and place) (Kleinman, 1992, p. 8). Rooted in anthropology, the approach is guided by four schools of thought. Classical (a description of the what, where, how, and why of behaviour), interpretive (discover the meaning of observed social interactions), critical (researcher and researched, together, create a cultural schema), and systematic ethnography defines the structures of culture (Speziale, 2003).

Critical ethnography was the philosophical stance selected to guide the study. Philosophically, critical theory emphasizes that truth/knowledge is filtered through lenses. Reality is interpreted through social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). In order to survive, less powerful groups, such as the oppressed, must be attuned to the culture of the dominate group (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

Traditionally, ethnography involved intense and prolonged immersion into a culture of interest to obtain the ‘emic’ perspective (Speziale, 2003). Speziale (2003) differentiates between ‘mini-’ and ‘maxi-’ ethnography in relation to the scale or focus of the study. The study had a narrow, specific focus and therefore a mini-ethnography approach was used. This study looked at farming women’s aggregate in Southern Manitoba, who share the experiences of farm residence/or who derive a living from farming. The participants, a limited number of farm

women with self-identified stress experiences (a single social situation) in their lives will be interviewed.

Ethnography was selected as it: spoke to the research question more comprehensively, provided a deeper understanding of women's socio-cultural stress experiences, and provided a basis for change in delivering services to farm women. As well, personal experiences and subsequent assumptions as a farm woman were more reflective of the critical ethnography approach. Thus the aim of methodological coherence (congruence between the research question and the components of the method) was met (Morse et al., 2002).

There are six fundamental characteristics that are essential to ethnographic research (Speziale, 2003). These characteristics include: the researcher as instrument, fieldwork, cyclic nature of data collection and analysis, focus on culture, cultural immersion, and reflexivity. The characteristics of ethnography are described in the methods section.

Method

The following discussion addresses the study's method or research plan used in the study. The sampling approach, sample, recruitment, data collection and management procedures, data analysis, quality in qualitative research, and ethical considerations are addressed.

Sampling Approach

Initially, the plan was to obtain a sample from the farming communities in Southern Manitoba situated and bordered by The Regional Health Authority-Central Manitoba. The site had been selected for several reasons including

convenience, predominance of agricultural industry, lowest average income among rural RHA's in Manitoba (RHA Central Manitoba Inc. 2004), and it had the second highest use of the MFRSL (MFRSL, 2003). However, the farm women recruited lived within bordering Regional Health Authorities-Brandon and Assiniboine. The participants who volunteered to participate all lived on southwestern Manitoba farms within approximately a thirty mile radius of each other. The homogeneity of place of residence is indicative of the address of the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line (MFRSL). The women who work at the call centre all live within commuting distance, hence recruited from the same area.

A non-probabilistic sampling approach to sample recruitment was used. The approach to sampling allowed the identification of specific groups of people who possessed characteristics and live in circumstances relevant to the social phenomenon being studied (Mays, & Pope, 1996). Purposive sampling is one such strategy where the researcher uses their knowledge about a particular group to select and perhaps seek out negative cases that may help to illuminate cultural differences (Barbour, 2001). Purposive sampling ensured efficient and effective saturation of categories, while obtaining high quality data (Morse, et al., 2002).

Three strategies were used to obtain a non-probabilistic sample. The strategies included purposive sampling, snowballing, and posters. Four participants were recruited with the assistance of the staff at the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line. When recruitment became stagnant, participants were asked if other women they knew would be interested in the study. Four women

were subsequently recruited by snowballing. The combination of sampling approaches was intended to maximize recruitment, and improve the heterogeneity of the resulting sample of farm women (Rice, et al., 1999). An invitation to program clients was posted on the MFRSL web site (Appendix D), and posters were hung in numerous (25) rural establishments. These recruitment methods proved highly ineffective.

The Sample

The selection criterion centered on specific predetermined criteria. Women selected were to have been 18-50 years of age, able to read, speak, and write in English, live on, operate or help to operate a farm, be willing to discuss their stress experiences within the context of the farm 'way-of-life', and be available for two interviews. This age group was particularly targeted as there was evidence to suggest that younger farm women may have higher levels of stress symptoms (Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin, & Rose, 2003; Walker & Walker, 1988). Farm women who were acquainted with the researcher were not selected as study participants.

Recruitment

The director and staff of the MFRSL were selected for the recruitment process to help minimize recruitment issues. Rapport building, an essential part of ethnography, began in 2004 with the staff of the MFRSL. The purpose of the MFRSL was to provide confidential support, counselling, and referral services to rural and farm families through a toll-free telephone counselling service (MFRSL, 2003). The staff members are trained counsellors in the area of farm stress, have

rural and farm backgrounds, are trusted within the community, and have an understanding of the farming stress experiences. Their 'emic' perspectives would ensure that participants were recruited by 'insiders', thereby reducing recruitment issues specific to vulnerable farm women. A letter of support is included (Appendix A).

Women who volunteered to participate in the study met the predetermined criteria. They were friends, colleagues, neighbors, or acquaintances of the staff at the MFRSL. As well, those recruited by snowballing were either close friends, and/or colleagues who participated in a rural women's group. The names of the participants became known once the women agreed to be contacted by the researcher.

The recruiter made the first contact with prospective participants by phone or in person. Upon initial contact, the recruiter read an Initial Contact Statement introducing the research, issued the initial invitation to participate, and sought permission for contact by the researcher (Appendix C). Recruiters were told to avoid undue pressure and coercion.

Potential participants agreeing to be further contacted were telephoned by the Principal Investigator (PI). During the follow-up call, the PI sought follow-up verbal consent to participate by giving clear explanations about: the purpose of the study, the organization involved, possible outcomes (benefits and potential harm), and measures to protect confidentiality, voluntariness of participation, time commitment, and accessibility of summary of the findings. At this time, a date, time, and location for the interview were determined. A reminder telephone call

was made the day before the scheduled interview. A date, time, and location of the second interview were determined following the receipt of the participant photographs.

Every effort was made to have the follow-up interview within three to four weeks of the first interview, unfortunately there were delays in having the photographs taken, returned, and developed. A follow-up letter explaining the study was provided to each participant (Appendix D). On average, the PI/participant had 6 contacts (telephone calls, interviews, and mailings). The numerous contacts contribute to effective rapport development. The contact experiences were documented in detail in field notes and became part of the data. The study participants although burdened by work and lack of time felt compelled to complete the study. One participant delayed the second interview because she had emergency surgery.

Data Collection Procedures

From a feminist perspective, there has been much debate as to what method should be used to bring the voices of women and their subjective 'lived experiences' to the forefront (Ironstone-Catterall, McDonough, Robertson, Payne, Rahder, Shaver & Wakewich, 1998). There is agreement that the method selected should best answer the research question. The following sections provide information of the data collection methods of photovoice and interviews, interview strategies, the interview setting, the demographic questionnaire, field notes, reflexive notes, and the appropriateness of the data collection process and methods.

Photovoice.

Photovoice is a participatory method that uses visual imagery (photographs) as a means of enabling the identification of central issues in people's lives (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice is grounded in Friere's method of problem posing in education, feminist theory, and by the historical and contemporary use of photography (Wang & Burris, 1997). The method gives a visual image of the insider's viewpoint, at a specific moment in time, and can give meaning to experiences that are often difficult to express with language.

Kleinman (1992) suggests that the meaning of experiences may occur across different mediums including sight, sound, touch, smell, and feel. Hence, photovoice was felt to be consistent with ethnography. According to Wang & Burris (1997) photovoice has the potential for emphasizing the importance of community stories, lore, observations, and historical perspectives that reflect the spirit of a community. There are potential burdens associated with the method which may include self-censorship, protection from harm, and the issue of personal judgment in taking photographs (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice was selected as a guide for the second interview to provide participants with control over the research process (selection over what was photographed, and which photograph would be discussed), and to tell their stories about the meanings of the photographs (Barbour, 2001). The participants were instructed to take photographs depicting their stress experiences. Thus, a clearer ethnographic description would be portrayed.

At the end of the pre-photovoice interview, participants were given a 'Media' disposable camera. The participants were instructed on the use, and care of the camera (Appendix J). Cameras were returned to the Principal Investigator (PI) in a stamped addressed envelope. The PI covered the postal costs and the cost of film development. Two sets of prints were ordered. One set was given to the participant whereas the other set was kept by the researcher.

Photovoice provided useful insights into farm women's stress experiences. However, the burden of photography in the mist of frigid winter weather was not considered when the study was undertaken. Whilst none of the participants complained, the burden of doing winter photography was overlooked. As a result, the participants were not informed about the additional burden. Although photovoice would still be used, participants would have been given the option of refusing to take photographs. The visual expression of women's stress experiences provided insight and understanding into their behavior (Szto, Furnman, & Langer, 2005), and their cultural dualities.

The photographs taken revealed both commonalities and individual differences. Commonalities centered on major issues. The economics of farming was represented by photographs of cows (pastures, and corrals), of rising utility costs (hydro electricity, fuel, food), machinery expenses, and of homes and farm buildings in various states of disrepair. The importance and subsequent concerns of family were reflected in photographs of the spouse, children, and the "in-laws". Burden of work and lack of time were represented by photographs of income tax

files, work-shops and offices in various states of chaos. Farm safety concerns were represented by photographs of farm machinery, and farm equipment.

Rural depopulation and change photographs were represented by the closure of a grain elevator, “dying town”, and location of off-farm work for farming couples. The community stories and lores of one woman’s experiences were represented in a photograph of a cemetery. Individual struggles with body weight were represented in photographs of bathroom scales, an unused treadmill, and a closet filled with clothes of various sizes. Individual states of health and illness were represented by bottles of medication, and pictures of the self as responsible for the misinterpretation of stressors that contributed to the development of stress.

Interviews

All interviews were conducted by the principle investigator. A guided interview was selected to answer the research question. Guided interviews provided a flexible framework that enabled both the PI and the participant to access and identify key areas on the subject of inquiry (Gribich, 1999). The guided interview also provided the opportunity for reciprocal sharing of knowledge and experience between the researcher and the participant, facilitated reflexivity, and provided a platform that acknowledged women as experts of their own experiences (Ironstone-Catterall, et al., 1998). Reflexivity, a fundamental characteristic of feminist ethnographic research, is a process where the PI reflected and acknowledged the biases that may impact on the research process (Ironstone-Catterall, et al., 1998). A pre- and post-photovoice interview was

deemed essential to capture the essence of the experiences of farm women's stress experiences.

Pre-Photovoice Interview.

The pre-photovoice interview was a face-to-face interview, and was guided by an interview protocol (Appendix H). The interview questions were developed from theory, previous research, intuition, and in a language that the participant understood as was recommended by Gribish (1999). Intuition is described as "notions that the interviewer has in mind from his/her own experiences that require exploration" (Gribich, 1999, p. 93). The language of the interview questions was reviewed by a farm woman, who together with her spouse, owns and operates a grain farm southwest of the city of Winnipeg. The interview questions and subsequent probes were developed and revised accordingly (Appendix H). The order of the questions was changed following the first interview. Subsequently, after the second pre-photovoice participant interview, a question asking participants to identify their own levels of stress (low, medium, or high) was added.

The pre-photovoice interview ranged from 2 -2 ½ hours in duration in January 2006. This time frame was selected as this was normally a period of reduced seasonal farming workloads. The period of reduced workload was very narrow, ranging from November to January. The interview was tape-recorded to maintain authenticity of the data.

Guided face-to-face interviews required considerable interviewing skills to obtain insightful data. As a novice interviewer, the Principal Investigator

preferred a well structured interview; however upon entering the field the participants had a penchant for fewer formalities. The interview protocol served as a guide in subsequent interviews. The first interview proceeded with a settling down period where the Interview Preamble (Appendix I) was read. Concerns were addressed at this time, and throughout the interview. The strategy described had been previously used as a way to establish rapport (Gribish, 1999). The PI found it effective during the first interview. The consent process was discussed (Appendix F), and the consent forms were signed in duplicate.

Post-Photovoice Interviews.

Immersion in the farming culture was facilitated by having two interviews for each participant. The second interview was scheduled during calving season. The photographs were the focus of the second interview. The post-photovoice interview was a participant-led interview that facilitated trust and relationship building which are considered hallmarks of ethnographic research (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999). The post-photovoice interview provided an opportunity for respondent validation (clarify participant ideas and meanings) of the data collected during the first interview.

The second interview lasted 1 1/2-2 1/2 hours at a mutually agreed upon site. Two participants agreed to a telephone interview. The photographs were mailed to those participants who preferred the telephone interview. The process for the second interview was similar to the first interview (interview preamble, and verbal consent to participate). A summary of the data collected during the first interview was presented, followed by a description of the photographs.

Subsequently, the following question was asked: "Has anything happened since the last interview that may have had an impact on your stress experiences? Lastly, a description of the photographs was undertaken. Each participant was instructed to start speaking to their photographs by saying 'I took this picture because...'.

The participant was instructed to choose six of the twelve photographs that best depicted her cultural experiences of stress (Appendix J). The participants decided to speak to all the photographs. Photographs were labelled (1 thru 12) for identification purposes. The interview was tape recorded. The photographs used in presentations were altered to ensure confidentiality of the participants.

At the conclusion of the interview, participants were thanked, given the researcher's phone number, and escorted out of the hotel conference room/hotel room, or they escorted the PI out of their offices, and or homes. An individualized hand written thank-you was mailed a week after the interviews. There has been no further contact with the participants, although a "thinking of you" card will accompany a research summary that will be sent in July 2006.

Interview strategies.

Farm women who traditionally had been voiceless and invisible were given an opportunity to voice personal experiences, meanings, and views in their own words. Interview strategies were used during both interviews to increase the depth of the data collected. The interview was kept flexible with questions emerging as a result of answers to previous questions (Britten, 1995). As the participant answered the initial questions, the women were asked to clarify, explain, and expand the responses (Devault, 1990). With each subsequent

interview, the wording of the questions changed to reflect farm women's own words (Pope, et al., 1995). For example, instead of using the word stress, the PI substituted the word that the participant had used to define the concept (ie: worry) in all the subsequent questions. As women talked, the researcher sought clarification of words. If women did not have the words to express themselves concisely, the researcher "listened around and beyond the words" by looking at facial expressions, and body language (Devault, 1990).

Interview setting.

The setting can influence people's behaviour, feelings, and their responses to questions (Speziale, 2003). Kleinman (1992) suggests that a naturalistic setting should be provided for ethnographic fieldwork. The researcher should go to the location of the culture of interest (Speziale, 2003). Ideally, the interviews would have been held at the farm home but five participants chose another site. When asked about the rationale for the interview site selection, all participants wanted to facilitate the process for the researcher. None of the participants accepted reimbursement for their transportation costs. The interviews conducted at participant's home were done in the absence of children and/or family members. Therefore the depth, truthfulness, and accuracy of data collected in the home environment were not compromised.

Factors that were thought to influence the research agenda such as seasonal and farm workload considerations, a late harvest, inclement weather, impassable roads, getting lost due to inadequate road signage did not impede the

process. Data collection was unhampered, although flexibility with scheduling the second interview was paramount because of the impending calving season.

A variety of sites were used for the interviews. The first interview was conducted at a hotel conference room (3), a hotel room (1), a cafeteria (1), and at participant's home (3). The second interviews were held at the participant's place of employment (2), home (2), hotel room (2), while two participants were interviewed on the telephone. The level of disclosure comfort was affected by the participant's personal preference versus convenience of conducting the interview. For example Participant Four was very apprehensive of welcoming the Principle Investigator into her home because of the house's state of disrepair. Apprehension was in the form of embarrassment and it is reflected in her words during the post-photovoice interview:

"I don't even like people driving into the yard that I don't know, like it's embarrassing to me. Like and when you were coming here I went, oh she's gonna look at this house, and that's the way I am with anybody that drives in. I go, they're gonna judge us by the look of the outside of that house and it is a lot of stress."

The post-photovoice interview for Participant Four was conducted over the telephone and the client felt more at ease. In this study, the depth, truthfulness, and accuracy of the data collected may have been compromised by the setting of the interview and not by the presence of other people. The

naturalistic setting although informative was not the best place to interview the women.

Demographic Questionnaire

The participants were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire preceding the start of the pre-photovoice interview (Appendix G). The demographic questionnaire was developed to provide baseline information about the study participants. The participants answered all the questions.

Field Notes

During the interview, brief written notes were taken (Appendix N). The notes included main thematic words, words requiring clarification, non-verbal communication, observations, and interpretive hunches. The observations were noted in field notes (Appendix O). At the end of the interview, the notes were used to provide concluding remarks giving the participant the opportunity to further clarify ideas and meanings. Field notes included visual observations, and active listening strategies.

The descriptive journal notes included descriptions of the physical setting, and conversations that took place while the tape was turned off. A windshield survey (Sharpe, Greaney, Lee, & Royce, 2000), defined as a tour of a community with the purpose of observing and recording community characteristics, provided the basis of the descriptive notes. The windshield survey, as an ethnographic tool was meant to provide a “larger view of what is actually occurring in a social situation” (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003, pp.167).

Reflexive Notes

The PI was reflexive by constantly taking stock of personal feelings, actions, and roles in research that could influence data analysis. Personal feelings, shifting views, and observations were documented. As a farm woman, personal definitions of stress and roles had shifted significantly during the extensive literature review, and data collection process. These changing views were continually assessed, thereby preventing the researcher's personal point of reference from influencing the study participants. The PI is an insider to the farming community. The maintenance of a reflective personal journal field notes ensured the truthfulness and honesty of the research data was maintained (Rice, et al, 1999). As well, the soundness of the research design provided a pathway whereby research users will be able to discern how the study was conducted. The reflective notes (ideas, hunches, impressions, feelings) were written following each interview. These reflective strategies helped to ensure confirmability of the findings (Speziale, 2003).

Appropriateness of data collection process and method

Factors that were thought to influence the research agenda such as seasonal and farm workload considerations, a late harvest, inclement weather, impassable roads, getting lost due to inadequate road signage did not impede the process. Data collection was unhampered, although flexibility with scheduling the second interview was paramount because of the impending calving season.

The pre- and post photovoice interview proceeded as planned. Participants did not have any questions in relation to the study's method, and design. The

participants asked questions about how the study findings would be utilized. The combination of two in-depth interviews and the use of photovoice were an effective medium for establishing rapport, immersion in the culture, and identifying patterns of similarities and differences in the data. Some divergent information occurred within the interviews, between the interviews, and through the photographs. For example, during the first interview Participant 2 was asked about the economic feasibility of their farming operations she answered by saying:

“...I wouldn't say finance [cause me stress] even though it's something we've very careful with now. I just know my limits...”

During the second interview the participant indicated:

“BSE has put us in a tough position, [our finances] are much worse.”

The participant then took photographs representative of the high costs of food, hydro electricity, and fuel).

All the participants all had emotional episodes during the interviews. Some participants became angry, and/or sad. Three out of the eight women cried during the first and second interviews. The other five participants dabbed their eyes, swallowed back tears, and took calming pauses. One woman cried during the entire interview. When asked if the tape recorder should be turned off, she declined. During other interviews the tape recorder was turned off and immediate support was given. The participants did not feel they required professional

assistance from the staff at the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line. Women felt the interviews had been therapeutic in nature as evidenced by the women's off the record field note comments such as "I left my stress at the Lakeview Inns and Suites", "It just feels good to talk", "It feels good to be listened to, I usually do all the listening".

Data Analysis

Qualitative data collection and analysis was cyclic in nature (Speziale, 2003). Sandelowski (1995) suggests that researchers must look at the whole in order to identify what they should look for in their data. A succinct process in data preparation was followed to ensure data analysis was not prematurely closed (Sandelowski, 1995). Five sources of data collection were used in the analysis. They included reflective notes, interview transcriptions, participant photographs, field notes, and participant demographic information. The different sources of data facilitated triangulation of the findings. Steps for conducting ethnographic research, data analysis, and writing the ethnography will be addressed.

The taped participant interviews were transcribed by a transcriber, who was instructed to remove all names and any other information that could possibly identify participants. As well, the tonality of voices, pauses, sounds, and utterances voiced by those on the tapes, as well as nonverbal components such as interruptions, were to be included on the transcription. The numbered pages and lines facilitated analysis. The researcher listened to the audio tapes prior to handing the tape to the transcriber, and once the completed transcriptions were

returned to ensure the accuracy of the interview transcriptions. The photographs were labelled to correspond to the appropriate interview participant.

The field notes kept during the interviews were incorporated during the data analysis. Field notes were coded, typed, edited, and promptly expanded upon by the researcher. Mays et al., (1996) suggest that prompt transcription and meticulous record keeping are essential to ensuring dependability of study findings.

Sampling and data collection continued until thematic saturation of themes, concepts, and ideas occurred (Rice, & Ezzy, 1999). Although, Speziale (2003) suggests that questions of culture may never be completely answered. Saturation, a measure of dependability, was ensured by the replication of domains and taxonomies. Replication of taxonomies helped to ensure comprehension and completeness of the data (Morse, et al., 2002).

Throughout the process the PI sought consultation from her thesis supervisor on the data collection and analysis process. The central theme and the four taxonomies were confirmed by the supervisor.

Steps for Conducting Ethnographic Research

There were numerous analytical steps involved in an ethnographic study. Data collection and data analysis collection were cyclical in nature. Spradley's (1980) steps for conducting ethnographic research provided analytical guidance (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). The steps included domain and taxonomy identification, componential analysis, identification of cultural themes and writing the ethnography will be described.

Domain identification.

Domain analysis began while in the field. The goal of domain analysis was to discover and search for patterns (in social situations) that make up the cultural scene (culture under study). The domain analysis triggered the “next round of observations” which in turn led to taxonomic identification (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003, p. 171). The main themes of the reviewed stress theories became foundational to domain identification. The main themes included: host, forces, processes, stress responses, and a consequence of the stress response (Table 11). During my first and subsequent interviews, comparisons of individual experiences were made using the main themes of the stress theories.

During preliminary interviews a central observation surfaced which triggered the “next round of observations” (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003, p. 171). The central observation was that the stress experience was unique to each individual woman. A sketch may of an analyzed domain is presented (Appendix O).

Taxonomy identification.

These focused domain observations provided the foundation for a taxonomic analysis. A taxonomic analysis provided a deeper analysis of the previously identified domains (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). Three outcomes of taxonomic analysis included the discovery of larger categories to which the domains belong, the discovery of relationships (between parts, or to the whole), and the generation of questions about emerging concepts. The questions could be

dyadic (identify differences), and/or triadic contrast (identify relationship similarities among three categories) in nature (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003).

Componential analysis.

The next step in analysis involved componential analysis. Componential analysis was a language driven process used to search for the characteristics (attributes) associated with cultural categories (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). The search for attributes further broke down the data into units of meaning. Each unit of meaning became an attribute of the culture. Domains were examined again to identify the missing data (dimensions of contrast).

Spradley (1980) suggested an eight step sequential process in doing a componential analysis (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). They included: select a domain for analysis; prepare an inventory of previously discovered differences; prepare a paradigm (worksheet); classify dimension of contrast; combine related dimensions of contrast; prepare contrast question for missing attributes, conduct selective observations and interviews to discover missing data; prepare a complete “paradigm that can be used as a chart in the ethnography” (Spradley, 1980, p. 139 in Speziale & Carpenter, 2003)

Componential analysis was used to identify the characteristics of each cultural attribute. The analysis included a search for words that best described the cultural attribute. The process included returning to the domains, and identifying missing data. The results of the componential yielded an Ethnographic Paradigm (Table 2). The Ethnographic Paradigm (Appendix P) is an overall representation of the data. The paradigm provided the guidance to write the ethnography. The

iterant process of data analysis proved highly successful in the identification of a central theme.

Identification of cultural themes.

The discovery of cultural themes is the ultimate outcome of the analysis (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). The discovery of cultural themes was facilitated by immersing oneself in the data by reading and re-reading transcript data (Mays, et al., 1996). Complete immersion in the data over an extended period of several months illuminated different exploratory pathways in identifying patterns. A central cultural theme was identified following several months of being immersed in the data (field notes, interview transcripts, photographs).

Writing the ethnography.

A detailed ethnography was “built around and told in the words, views, explanations, and interpretations” of what people said, did, and believed at a given time and place in their lives (Kleinman, 1992, p. 12). The process was guided by the concept of culture. Thick descriptions and verbatim quotations were provided to ensure transferability of the findings.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Issues of trustworthiness in the qualitative research paradigm have been and continue to be a source of controversy (Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002). Strategies ensuring trustworthiness or rigor (validity and reliability) were been built-in from the study’s inception to data collection and analysis. Validity refers to the “degree to which a measurement measures what it purports to measure (Last, 2001, p. 184). Reliability is the “degree of stability

exhibited when a measurement is repeated under identical conditions” (Last, 2001, p. 156). This section underscores the importance of rigor as an evaluation of the overall qualitative research findings. Strategies including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability will be presented.

Credibility refers to the accuracy with which the participant’s ‘lived experiences’ are depicted and identified by the participant themselves (Speziale, 2003). In this study, credibility was assured through prolonged engagement with the participants. The post-photovoice interview provided an opportunity for respondent validation (clarify and confirm data) of the pre-photovoice interview data. Furthermore, participants were provided with the PI’s home telephone number to provide opportunity to clarify information given during the post-photovoice interview. Ultimately, Mays and Pope (2000) suggest that respondent validation may reduce misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the data.

Dependability is similar to validity (Speziale, 2003). Dependability entails the provision of a clear audit trail (data collection procedure, and analysis) that would allow other researcher reading the study to come up with similar conclusions (Speziale, 2003). The dependability of the findings from the study data (interview transcripts, photographs, reflective journal notes, and descriptive field notes) were compared to establish patterns of similarities or differences by triangulation. Triangulation is a process that compares the results from either two or more different methods of data collection (Mays & Pope, 2000). Triangulation may improve dependability of the findings.

Confirmability refers to the maintenance of neutrality, and the prevention of personal bias that can potentially influence the research findings (Speziale, 2003). In this study confirmability was ensured by reflexivity (the acknowledgement of prior assumptions and experiences in shaping the data) (Mays & Pope, 2000). Reflective journals ensured the researcher's personal and intellectual biases were kept in check.

Transferability refers to the applicability of the study's findings to other settings (Speziale, 2003). Caution should be exercised as the culture of a group is an ever-changing and dynamic phenomenon whose application may only be pertinent in the explored context (Speziale, 2003). The written report of the study findings contains thick descriptions, and verbatim quotations so that a researcher wanting to use the research findings could judge the appropriateness of transferring the findings to another group. Transferability was enhanced by having a wide variety of participants where attention to negative cases was fully explored. Mays and Pope (2000) defined a negative case as one that contradicts or seems to contradict established findings. A negative case was found in the sample of eight farm women.

Ethical Considerations

The study was guided by fundamental ethical principles (Steinke, 2004). Ethical considerations included respect for persons (persons as autonomous), beneficence (the obligation to protect and do no harm), and justice (discussion of risk, benefits, and informed consent) (Steinke, 2004). In order to abide by the fundamental principles, the study proposal was submitted for approval at three

levels. The PI's thesis committee reviewed the study proposal, thus ensuring that the soundness of the research design, and ethical principles were addressed. An ethics application was sent to The Education Nursing Research Board (ENREB) at the University of Manitoba, and was approved without revisions (Appendix L). Ethical approval was granted from the Regional Health Authority-Central (Appendix N).

The consent form (Appendix F) fully describing the research project (researcher interests, purpose, interview guide, interview process, data collection, and analysis procedures) was developed. Participants were then autonomous to make an informed decision of whether to participate or not in the study (Steinke, 2004). Information about voluntary participation and withdrawal from the study was included in the consent form. A duplicate consent forms was given to each participant. If the participant wished, the researcher would have read the consent form out loud to ensure the content was understood. All participants choose to read the consent individually. Questions about informed consent were addressed as they arose.

The risks and benefits of the study were discussed with the participants. The benefits far outweighed the risks. Firstly, participation provided an opportunity for women to voice their stress experiences in their own words, thus legitimizing their knowledge. Secondly, the development of a heightened awareness of the interplay of social, psychological, and physiological factors in their lives may have provided the impetus to seek long overdue professional

assistance. Thirdly, the interviews were beneficial and therapeutic for some participants.

The risks associated with the proposed study were minimal. Risk is defined "as a chance or potentiality for loss or harm" (Shattell, 2004, p. 16). However safeguards to protect the participants were put in place to minimize harm should it occur. The interviews had the potential and did bring out unanticipated emotional episode such as crying. The affected participants refused professional counselling services. Care was taken to address potential emotional outburst as they arose (Rice, et al., 1999). Prior arrangements were made with the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line to provide professional counselling services. The participants were also given a Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line pamphlet that could be later used at their discretion (Appendix K).

The potential for exploitation resulting from the development of researcher/interviewee relationship was a genuine ethical concern (Punch, 1995). Exploitation may be especially concerning when feminist theory and ethnography are combined (Stacey, 1991). Although Hall and Stevens (1991) suggest that relationship building is important to understanding women's 'emic' perspectives, care must be taken to maintain clear researcher/participant boundaries. Although, relationship building is essential for gathering rich data; a dilemma may exist upon completion of the study. The participants were very friendly, and expressed a willingness to meet again after the completion of the study. The ethical principles were followed by dealing with relationship issues with honesty, integrity, and respect for others' well-being. The researcher, as a nurse was

guided by the professional ethical nursing guidelines (CNA, 1998), and Socialist Feminist Theory. The researcher plans to prevent the perception of being “used and discarded” by sending a ‘thinking of you’ card six months (July, 2006) following the scheduled interviews.

Data Management

When applying ethical principles, confidentiality was paramount (Steinke, 2004). Confidentiality and anonymity issues were important considerations especially because of the rural context. Rural communities tend to be like ‘fishbowls’. Unusual comings and goings of strangers are immediately noticed (Roberts, Battaglia, & Epstein, 1999). The PI made every attempt to maintain a low profile while conducting interviews within the various communities. Informal conversations with local service providers were kept at a superficial level.

Confidentiality was maintained during, and following data collection by having all interview tapes and transcripts locked in a filing cabinet in the PI’s office. The data will be kept for a period of seven years, after which, the data will be destroyed. Personal computer stored files were kept under a code name and will be deleted following data analysis. Names, addresses, and other identifying descriptors were deleted from all data sources. As well, the PI did not access any names until the Director, of the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line who was recruiting participants obtained the participant’s approval to be further contacted by the PI. The names of the participants were known in order to secure their written informed consent; however no names were attached to any data collection

methods (demographics, transcript of interviews, field notes, and photographs).

Photographs of people were altered to protect confidentiality.

Field notes (A), interview (B), journal field notes (C), photographs (D), and consent forms (E) of each individual participant were coded (1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E; 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E; etc.) to ensure accurate data management, and anonymity of data collection. The participant names and coded data were kept on separate files. Two separate lists, one with the participant's name (consent forms), and the other with the participant's code numbers are kept separately. The Principal Investigator (PI) had access to the lists linking the participants and the code numbers. Participant names and other potential identifiers will not be used in research reports. Dr. Roberta Woodgate, Thesis Chairperson, accessed the raw data as required when reviewing the cultural theme.

Summary

A mini-focused critical ethnographic approach was selected to answer the research question. A purposive sample of 8 farm women, who met the selection criteria, participated in pre and post-photovoice interviews. The participants were recruited from farming communities in southern Manitoba. The benefits far outweighed the risk in the proposed study. Endeavours were made to abide to prescribed ethical research standards.

Data collection strategies included a reflexive journal, demographic information, interviews transcripts, field notes, and photographs. Data analysis was cyclic in nature whereby data collection, data preparation, analysis, and interpretation followed a systematic itinerant process (domain, taxonomic, and

componential analysis). Rigor, a qualitative measure of validity and reliability, was ensured through strategies of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The setting, demographic data, and ethnography (main themes and taxonomies) are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY FINDINGS

The purpose of the chapter is to provide a description of the study findings. The setting, demographic data, and ethnography are presented. The main theme and supportive taxonomies will be defined and supported by women's verbatim quotes.

Setting

A community windshield survey was conducted during the commute to and from interviews. The seasonal realities of winter on the prairies were reflective of the bleakness, vastness, and emptiness of the landscape. Farm buildings and homes were interspersed throughout the countryside. Some small towns still had essential amenities such as: a gas station, post office, curling rink, church, and elementary school. While others towns only had a postal outlet out of a community resident's home. The inclement weather and adverse road conditions did not have an impact over the scheduling of the interviews. The road conditions were at times atrocious. The main highway was covered with ice, which made for precarious driving conditions. Road signage along the highway advertised the many farm services available at the larger commercial centre.

Three participants chose to be interviewed on the farm. The other six participants felt that meeting at a public place would facilitate the research process for the principal investigator. Beef, and or a combination of beef and grain farms appear to be most common in the area. The farm sites visited appeared in a state of clutter and disrepair (homes, and farm buildings). The farm

buildings were old and unpainted. The visible machinery however appeared fairly new and in good condition. There was livestock everywhere. Feedlots were full of cattle. Fallen trees, abandoned farm and motor vehicles, and piles of junk peaked through the high snow drifts. Men worked on various projects in the farmyard with their heavy parkas.

Although the homes were in a state of disrepair, the interior was “as clean as I can make it”. One home that looked majestic from the outside was actually falling apart from the interior. Other homes appeared to be a collage of small buildings positioned together. The exterior of the homes appeared to be at various states of renovation/disrepair. The interior of the homes showed signs of total neglect. Linoleum and carpeting were torn, and floors were caving in at several places. In one home, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch plywood was strategically placed where the floors had fallen through to the basement. The homes were drafty and cold. In one home the furnishings were old, and in poor condition while in the other two homes, the furnishings appeared in better shape.

Demographics Findings

The participant demographics questionnaire (Appendix G) was summarized in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants. A chart of the demographics is appended (Appendix P).

The Ethnography

A detailed ethnography using thick descriptions and verbatim quotations are presented. One main central cultural theme, entitled ‘The Self as Mediator of Changing Times’ was identified. The central theme is presented first, followed by

a description of the four taxonomies. Lastly, a conceptual model is presented to further elucidate the relationship between the cultural theme and the four taxonomies.

The Central Theme:

Self as mediator of cultural duality in changing times

The overall cultural knowledge that guided Manitoba farm women in conceptualizing their stress experiences was reflected by one all-encompassing theme. The Self as mediator of cultural duality in changing times was represented in Figure 1. The figure illustrates the conceptual model of farm women's stress experiences and incorporates the four supportive taxonomies. The four taxonomies include: 'Self as invisible agent of changing times'; 'Self as cognizant agent of changing times'; 'Self as subservient nurturing agent of the family'; and 'Self as minder of women's inner voice'. The 'self' refers to the aggregate of Southern Manitoba farm women.

Definition of Central Theme

The self as mediator of cultural duality in changing times, represented farm women's stress experiences. Farm women's stress experiences were expressed by a co-existence of feminine and traditional masculine realities. Being a woman in a man's world was a challenge especially when the man's world was attached to a farm. Farming, a capitalist institution has funding, and work primacy over and above farm women. Farm women must try and meet the needs of the farm, spouse, children, and lastly their own needs. Women as invisible

contributors are expected to subjugate and forsake their own needs to ensure the farm's survival.

The BSE crisis created an economic crisis that threatened the farm's survival, and as a result threatened the way-of-life for farm men, women, and children. Farm women experienced their spouse's stress vicariously, felt out of control, and as a result became the emotional symptom bearer of the family. Women's capacity was weakened resulting in the perception of loss of control. This led to a reappraisal of the entire way-of-life. Although women felt able to manage (taking control, and coming together with friends, family, and community), there was recognition of their inability and limits to influence the micro and macro level socio-economic-political changing times.

The main theme is supported by the taxonomies and the participant who is a negative case. The negative case is a farm woman whose self assessed stress level was low. The participant balanced the cultural duality by having highly developed problem solving abilities. Neither hopelessness, nor guilt was experienced. The participant was an active partner and in control on the farm, at home, and at work. The participant managed by finding solutions to the problems. The woman clearly articulated that the root causes of stress needed to be addressed. The participant felt unable to deal with micro and macro-level changes. Although, personal levels of stress were low, stress was vicariously experienced through the male farmer.

Taxonomies

The cultural taxonomies that distinguished the central theme included: Self as invisible agent of the way-of-life; Self as cognizant agent of changing times; Self as subservient nurturing agent of the family; Self as minder of women's inner voice. The cultural attributes characterizing the taxonomies will be presented with the use of thick descriptions, and verbatim quotations. An ethnographic paradigm of the taxonomies and supporting literature is included to facilitate understanding (Appendix Q).

Self as Invisible Agent of the Way-of Life

The self as invisible agent of the way-of-life represented the good farm women who forsook and subjugated their own needs to ensure the survival of the farm. A componential analysis revealed five cultural attributes (Table III).

Farm women felt during the early phase of the pre-photovoice interview, that the way-of-life represented freedom, independence, and pride. One woman felt that "the reality is you have to live the way...it is still a wonderful way of life". Women indicated that they loved the life as indicated by this woman's words:

"People wonder why you want to farm when that is the way it is [economic instability] it's the freedom that you can if you don't want to work today, you can go, it's only your work that is waiting the next day."

Pride was reflected by the sense of peace and reward in “watching our cows grazing down in the meadow”. Another woman defined pride with the following statement:

“Even though there is pride, that you are a producer, that working and [that] you are providing for yourself and your family with your own business, I don’t even call it a business.”

When women were asked about the perceived benefits of farm life, they expressed feelings of being “at peace”, “of calmness”, and “having a sense of privacy”, and “solitude of just being out there”. These perceived benefits are different from values of freedom/independence/pride.

As the interview progressed, farm women described conflicting feelings about the farm way-of-life. The inconsistent feelings were expressed during the first and second interview, and through the photographs. Although at first glance women appeared to be happy with the farm way-of-life their testimony was reflective of ambivalence of whether the life was all that it was meant to be. Women appeared to tell stories of pride/freedom/independence, while at the same time reporting oppressive group characteristics. Hence, farm women appeared to be living a cultural duality where they had learned and incorporated the male value system of the farm way-of-life. Farm women’s testimony of the following cultural attributes illustrates the perception of oppression on the farm. The five cultural attributes characterizing “Self as invisible agent of the way-of-life” are personification of the farm as entity, women’s needs inferior to the farm/farmer,

“you have to make sacrifices” and “doing what needs to be done”, and relinquishing control to male authority (Table III).

Table III: Ethnographic Paradigm-Self as invisible agent of the way-of-life

Taxonomy	Definition	Cultural Attributes
Self as invisible agent of the way of life	“The good farm woman” who forsakes and subjugates her own needs to ensure the survival of the farm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personification of the farm as entity • Women’s needs inferior to the farm, and the male farmer • “You have to make sacrifices” • “Doing what needs to be done” • Relinquishing control to male authority

Personification of the farm as an entity.

Personification of the farm as an entity defined how women think about the farm. The farm women who participated in the study felt that the farm was a living entity. They spoke of the farm as having needs. The farm needs were the priority that required their husband’s attachment.

Women had difficulty understanding the level of attachment between the male farmer and the farm. One woman referred to the farm as “the other woman”. The farm was an intrusion, similar to what could be experienced by a man’s extramarital affair. The farm usurped all the man’s time and money, while leaving nothing for the woman. The participant took a picture of a cow to illustrate that the cattle received more attention and time than she was given. The following represents women’s thinking about the farm:

“The farm is my husband, and my husband is the farm.”

“You cannot separate them [spouse and farm], it is not just an attachment, it is who they are.”

The importance of the farmer/farm attachment made women feel inferior to the needs of the farm.

Women's needs inferior to the farm and the male farmer.

Farm women interviewed had an acute awareness that the farm's sustenance was the priority. The farm as a capitalist enterprise usurped the majority of the farm's earnings, and required the farm family's time and energy. Farm women knew all too well that everything and everyone else was secondary to the goal of making the farm produce at all costs. Housing, for example was not considered a priority on the farm. One woman saw the neglect of the farm and her home as “symbolic of the state of the farm, and to a certain extent our relationship”.

Every woman interviewed took photographs of their homes in various states of disrepair, and renovation. These women expressed sadness, and hopelessness when talking about their homes. The participants felt that the home was the woman's domain and as such did not receive priority on the farm. The photographs were representative of some aspect of their homes that caused them stress. Participants felt the home and the farm yard were of particular importance to their sense of well-being. Women felt they were not allowed a new home, or to renovate the existing home because they had to be on constant alert and anticipate the farming lows. A woman expressed her disappointment:

“We could built a house and pay cash, we would not need a mortgage. I just cannot talk him into it. In fact, I don’t even try to talk him into it anymore. For some reason, there has to be so much money in the bank, in case of BSE and a drought comes. It is just really frustrating to me because as a woman’s point of view, a house is really important. We went through a lot of years when I really tried to push, push, push it and it caused a lot of friction, and arguments, fights and tension, and him [the husband] trying to just [disregard the request]. I slowly gave up as the kids got older...I get embarrassed when people drive into the yard...they’re [people] are going to judge us be the outside of that house and that causes me a lot of stress.”

As well, their spouses overwhelming burden of farm work precluded them from being able to renovate/repair the homes, and maintain the esthetics of the farm yard. The burden of work was such that men have started to do what one woman called “revenue generating work”. “Revenue generating work” encompassed all those activities that can “turn a profit”. As a result, the work associated with the farm’s esthetics appearance was not a priority and therefore not done. One woman’s description of the farm was reflective of this phenomenon:

“...there is junk around everywhere, which drives me completely around the bend. [The piles of junk] just keep

growing and growing, and growing and growing. This poor old tree [on a photograph] fell down two years ago and there it lies and it looks like hell and what it needs is for somebody to have a chainsaw to chop it apart...he doesn't have the time and we don't have the money to hire."

Whilst hard work was a way-of-life on the farm, farm women were expected to always anticipate the "lows of farming" or the "what ifs" and organize their spending accordingly because the "money is reinvested in the farm". As a result women were in a constant state of alert which may explain their definition of stress as "worry", and "monkey on my back". In response, women managed with the phenomenon of "knowing your [spending] limits", "go with the flow", "make whatever happens work", and "make the best of it." One woman's strategy for dealing with "knowing your limits" was reflected in this statement.

"And you think, well there's not enough money, and they you just, I just kinda put it out of my head, and I just think okay, we just gotta work with what we have, and, I try and do that."

In review, women felt that their needs, in particular their housing needs, were inferior to those of the farm. Women's need for appropriate shelter was secondary to the needs of the farm. Revenue generated work and the expectation of the lows of farming precluded the farm home and yard esthetics. Women did not have pride in the homes/farm yard.

"You have to make sacrifices".

Farm women felt that they had to sacrifice their own needs to maintain the every day life of the farm. Forsaking and subjugating own needs was an element of the way-of-life. Women continued to place the need of the way-of-life ahead of their own needs in order to meet cultural expectations. This phenomenon is best described by a woman who sacrificed the luxuries of life to sustain the way-of-life:

"And you still get a lot from [the way of life]. I mean if you didn't have the material things, you could live quite happily on the farm and totally forget about having a new car instead of a used car or you having a new outfit to wear to the school dance or you know, if you could just get away with the minimal."

In times of economic adversity farm women reported alteration in their spending habits. One woman's words were indicative of this phenomenon:

"And you think, well there's not enough money, and then you just, I just kinda put it out of my head, and I just think okay, we just gotta work with what we have."

Hard work was a sacrifice farm women took voluntarily. Farming was described by one woman as "hard work and they [farmers] have come from ancestors that worked really hard, to get where they're getting". Farm women felt they had a strong work ethic and they viewed the characteristic as instrumental to helping their husbands, and to cope with the insurmountable work loads. A typical

day was reflected for one woman as “being on call all the time.” While another woman reflected on her work ethic as follows:

“...There’s that side of me that he can rely on me for, any kind of work, because I do work hard. I’m, a big person, but, the harder I work, the better I feel.”

One participant believed that being raised on the farm was instrumental in the development of a strong work ethic because “it’s what you do” without being told to do it. One woman’s adaptation to the farm ‘way of life’ is evident by the following:

“I never ask him [if he wants my help], I just go, and [ask my husband], where we’re at? And I just, jump in the tractor or do whatever has to be done”

In times of economic struggle women expected to work harder. Farm work was difficult and challenging. For some, the work expectations were too high as reflected in this woman’s comments:

“Because he believes that in order for me to make a contribution, I need to be out there, like physically making the contribution, you know, [being] out there doing chores, or you know, in the field or, checking the cows or, building the fence, or doing the books, or, you know.”

Some women told stories of performing farm work with little instruction, and how unproductive, and worthless they felt as a result. One woman describes the experiences of farm work:

“Nerve racking cause, you know, if you make a screw up it’s gonna make more work for the men and that’s [not] why you’re out there to help.”

Women’s work ethic was well developed. Work was what motivated all the participants to get up in the morning. When stressed or worried, women indicated they worked harder as a means of coping because “it’s what you do.” One woman stated the farm way-of-life represents “a lot of work for little return.

When women complained about the way of life their husband doubted their attachment to the farm as indicated by one woman’s words:

“...My husband said to me once, your heart isn’t in it. I was very young then, and I had, busted my gut learning how to drive a combine, and how to drive a tandem axel and I just wanted to be there and learn. And I said what do you mean my heart not in it? ...made me feel like I wasn’t working hard enough.”

Women felt that hard work may not prove effective in sustaining the farm economically. Farming at all costs, for women meant that their husbands would invest everything to continue the family farm. Farmers would continue to farm even though the decision could impact on the current and future well-being of the family. The following represents one woman’s future farming decisions:

“We’re at the point right now; I mean we’re not as far into it [financial problems] as some people. We know some

very close friends, who [were forced] to sell their farm.

We still options, we still have RRSP, and we still have a house we can sell, because we have two houses [on the farm site].”

The burden of work was compounded by the fact that their husbands wanted to farm forever as reflected in one woman’s comments:

“...[Farmers] they hang on, and hang on, and hang on, and they don’t [quit]. In fact I don’t even want to ask him to retire, you can’t, tell him to retire.”

One woman’s declaration that she had worked hard and not gotten anything in return:

“I mean you’re doing what you do and you just do it because it needs to be done, but no, I mean it’s just expected of you I guess. And at the end of the day there is no reward.”

Another sacrifice that farm women made was the lack of leisure time to spend with their spouses and families. This sentiment was expressed in the following words:

“That’s life on the farm, or that’s what it is like to be married to a farmer...you can never leave, there’s always something to fix, and you are never free.”

In summary farm women indicated that the farm way-of-life meant they had to forgo the luxuries in life, and alter their spending habits. They also felt that

hard work, and lack of leisure time described women's way-of-life. Women felt able to manage but had difficulty with the notion of farming forever, and never being able to retire. The aforementioned description of the farm way-of-life is not reflective of freedom and independence.

"Doing what needs to be done".

Farm women reported the traditional values and beliefs were still prevalent among farming people. Farm women had an awareness of the gendered division of labor. The women in this study were expected to raise children, and do the housework. The gendered division of labor was reinforced not only by men, but by women as well. One woman described her husband's expectations as follows:

"And if I even mention [to my husband] having to do a dish in her presence, she [mother-in-law] says well you can always send him back...my husband is very chauvinistic of women's work so I find housework that's my chores."

A considerable part of farm women's work was invisible. The contributions included "doing what needs to be done" often went unrecognized by the men. These sentiments were reflected by one woman's words.

"When I first moved out to the farm and the guys wouldn't talk, they wouldn't involve me, in the conversation. So I was serving coffee and cooking cookies, in the background and picking up on the conversation, and then I would hear my husband say things that, I'd never heard him say to me

about farming. And it used to really frustrate me that I wasn't more part of those conversations because why would you think that I wouldn't understand or if I couldn't understand or why wouldn't you [husband] take the time to explain."

In summary, for the women who participated in the study the farming way-of-life was dominated by traditional gendered division of labor. Women's work remained invisible and unappreciated. This description is not reflective of pride/independence/freedom.

Relinquishing control to male authority.

Seven out of the eight farm women who participated in the study were daughters-in-law, who had married into the family farm. Women, who married into the family farm, felt they had to relinquish control to male authority because the farm did not belong to them as a couple. Women saw themselves as invisible contributors to the 'way-of-life', where they viewed themselves as undeserving of any part of the farm assets if the relationship were to break down. "The farm is his, he worked for it, his Dad worked for it, it is his". The farm belonged to the farm family; therefore they felt that they did not have the right or authority to participate in farming decisions. The following are the sentiments expressed by one woman:

"If he could even understand a little bit and think that my opinion even mattered out here on the farm. He goes and buys a Versatile combine, and [he claims] the farm needs it

and we keep on getting better equipment because the older equipment breaks down and there's repairs and stuff.

[Farm purchases] is not like something that is discussed in the family."

Farm women, who married into the farm, felt they had to relinquish all control to their husbands.

"...He wants to be in control of everybody, all the time and I also have four children and four children that don't want to be controlled...and they don't want to work with their dad. I can't blame them."

"...The thought that he might have to, relinquish, some of the control, and oh God forbid we should [even] entertain the idea."

In relinquishing control, women who married into the farm gave away the right to contribute to decision making. Men tended to consult women on menial decision. However, women felt belittled, because the consultation was considered tokenism. Tokenism is illustrated by these women's words:

"When you stand back and look at the big picture there are some decisions that he's made, that I certainly didn't agree with, but I also felt that I didn't have any, um, influence over them. He's always smart enough to come and ask me, but, then, I truly believe that he just makes his own decision and, I don't think he generally bases it on what I

have to say about it...Why don't you ask me something important? You're [the husband] gonna do whatever you want anyway so, just go do it!"

As well, in order to sustain the farm, women felt they needed unbending faith in their husband's ability to act in the family's best interest.

"[A good farm woman] has to be extremely supportive of her, husband, never, say a bad word about him, like, you know he's just a wonderful guy and we're gonna do what he wants to do and, and a very sixties kind of [thinking]. Of course that's when she [sister-in-law] was raised. You know she was raised in the sixties. And so, I kinda think [that] in order to be, a good farm wife you have to sort of have to have faith [in your husband]."

Lack of control, and token decision making were challenging. However, one woman felt that her man did not trust her because "I'm not allowed to touch anything because I might throw something valuable out", another felt that her husband felt she was "weak" in need of protection. Protection was provided by, "[my husband] doesn't talk to me about stuff [financial problems]". During the interviews, it became clear that women were not provided with information about the farm as evidence by their apparent lack of knowledge of farm matters (number of cattle, acres farmed, and future farming plans). Although women sought to become more involved, their efforts were often sabotaged as reflected in this woman's story of her unsuccessful attempts at "book-keeping":

“And then he [spouse] says if you want to do it [book-keeping] okay, and he just left [me on my own]. Well I had no clue of even how to start, so he just patiently waited while I [failed]. I had no chance without him sitting down on a daily basis and saying you know this is how we do it. So I just let it [book-keeping] go. [Book-keeping] comes naturally to him, he’s done it for so long and he just understands the mechanics of it. He’s got all the information in his head...and he got annoyed with me asking all this questions. He didn’t want it to happen.”

Women, in this study, married into the family farm. Women felt that they had to relinquish control, and decision making. Lack of information, lack of trust, and unquestioned male authority contributed to feelings of powerlessness to influence change at the farm, and farm family. The cultural attribute does not reflect values of pride/freedom/independence.

Self as Cognizant Agent of Changing Times

Self as cognizant agent of changing times represents women’s knowledge, and powerlessness to deal with the impacts of changing times (Table IV). As a result women felt that the fabric of farming was in a state of flux. Although, women described many perceived changes, a common response pattern emerged. Women felt “vulnerable”, and as such “unsure” of the future of farming. One woman described the experience of changing times as follows:

“You can hardly get through a day, I don’t know, it is a faster time now. Everything’s busy, instant, and compact.

It is hard to explain.”

Another woman felt that the changing time was creating a state of uneasiness in the community.

“[There is] a desperation to get back to when it was good [in farming]. When it [life] felt good. This is about the life you used to have and wishing it was all okay.”

The factors associated with the stress experiences are varied, and reflective of the individuality of the stress experience. However there were three common factors described by all farm women. The factors included economic forces, social changes, and political forces were the three cultural attributes that characterized “Self as cognizant agent of changing time” (Table IV). All the factors were perceived as uncontrollable, and were perceived as resulting from the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

Table IV. Self as cognizant agent of changing times

Taxonomy	Description	Cultural Attributes
Self as cognizant agent of changing times	Women as knowledgeable but powerless to deal with changing times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic forces, social, and political forces subsequently impacted on the family, farm, rural community forces

Economic forces.

Farm women felt that BSE had created undue financial crisis for the farm family, the farm, and the community. The economic crisis was seen as foundational to all the other issues. The most important factor in women's stress experience was "all financial stress" and it makes one woman feel "stripped to the bone". The concerns were centered on its perceived impacts on the family,

"I can tell you which farm families are struggling and which ones aren't by the behavior of the kids in the hallways...they're acting out in the hallways"

"I almost feel now at this point of agriculture [low market values for products] that we are like the slaves working the land, and everyone is suffering."

on the farm,

"When [BSE] came we found that we had to go to the bank, a lending institution and take out loans twice through the year. And you know money has to be paid back. There are outstanding payments on the tractors, and all sorts of stuff that need to be paid for and if we could sell some of these blessed animals we could do that."

and at the community level.

"I would say that [there is a] big change in our whole community because of [BSE] and so you feel somewhat more vulnerable."

Although the community was supportive of each other in times of crisis (i.e. unanticipated death), the community was unable to provide for each other when everyone was facing the same bleak prospects. One woman felt that “we are own worst enemies” because “we have relinquished control over everything.”

Social changes.

Women felt that the public perceptions of farmers were indicative of societal change. The “city people’s” perception of the farm’s economic sustainability was contributory to the “sense that nobody care and understands.” Historically, women felt that farmers were a well regarded group of people in society. However, one woman felt that “city people” did not understand that “farming is a way-of-life”, while another woman believed that the “public thinks we’re getting free money everyday in the mailbox”. Women emphasized that farming is not a business but a ‘way-of-life’ as reflective in the following narrative:

“[In farming], you maybe bought some equipment the year prior, relying on the money from your calves to pay your bills. When you get no money for your calves because the border’s closed, you can’t pay your bills and bill collectors start phoning and they have absolutely no compassion. They don’t care. These are city people, maybe they are not all city people, but they don’t care. They have a bottom line, they are here to phone. [Well I say to the bill collectors] I have a bunch of calves, or I have some cattle

in the yard that I could dump off, maybe ten or fifteen of them in your driveway if you like [in order to service the debt].”

Political forces.

Women felt that the government had “lost sight of the importance farming”. Whilst past governments were supportive of agriculture, women felt that this was no longer the case. The government was accused of “being asleep at the wheel”, “being pretty wussy”, “being pushed around by the Americans”, and as a result one woman had “less faith in the politics of farming.” When the BSE crisis occurred women felt that the government missed “a fantastic opportunity to create slaughter houses, and now the window of opportunity closed”.

Overall women felt that “our politicians have let us down” by “creating a welfare state on the farm, and that is no better than what we’ve [the government] have done to the Aboriginal population.” Another woman expressed her sentiments about subsidies:

“...no farmers want handouts. We want to be paid for what our [farm] product is worth. We want to be paid for what we produce and our time.”

The women involved in the study clearly articulated that the goal of farming was “not necessarily be rich, but be comfortable” and “have a decent income.” One woman words were reflective of the ineffectiveness of government programs:

“They [governments] are turning farmers into like welfare people, because they can’t make enough money at what they are doing to pay their bills and you know just be like everybody else.”

Economic, political, and social factors were seen as factors that were out of women’s control. Hence, women felt powerless to deal with the micro and macro level changes that plagued the farm way-of-life.

Self as subservient nurturing agent of the family

The self as subservient nurturing agent of the family represented the struggle to raise and educate children and be the caregiver of the family while placing the needs of the farm as the priority (Table V). Women felt that the needs of the farm superseded the children’s and men’s needs. Therefore women placed themselves at the end of the priority needs list. Two cultural attributes characterize the third taxonomy. They include: Farm superseded the children needs, and the spouse’s needs (Table V).

Table V. Self as subservient nurturing agent of the family

Taxonomy	Description	Cultural Attributes
Self as subservient nurturing agent of the family	Represent the struggle to raise and educate children and be the family’s caregiver	Farm needs supersedes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s needs • Spouse’s needs

Children needs.

Farm women as nurturers and caregivers placed much emphasis on the importance of their family’s well-being. Overwhelmingly, women indicated that

the central benefit to living on the farm was that it was “good for the kids”. The health of the family was paramount to woman’s sense of identity as expressed by one woman:

“I think it is a woman’s thing [to care about children]”

“I’m so close to my kids, and they are my entire life...because I am a hundred percent mom. That’s all I ever wanted, something [children] to love.”

The importance of family and parenting was a value that was reinforced by women’s own preference to stay home with preschool children, and by the criticism of women by women who choose to work off the farm. One woman’s thoughts were reflective of the traditional values that currently subsist:

“That [there is] a dichotomy that women insist upon between those who work out of the home and those who don’t and that is so profound in a farming community and it’s about parenting.”

“The importance to the parenting role is evidenced by one woman’s words describing being a good mother means

“my kids are probably the only reason to [exist].”

In times of economic insufficiency, such as experienced during the BSE crisis, women’s concern for their children’s well-being were exacerbated because the farm was unable to provide. One woman’s concerns were reflected by the following words:

“It’s not whether the farm survives this [BSE], or the rain, it is the worry of looking after my children and still being a good parent and giving [to them]. Like that’s hard thing you know, that’s what I hate about farming, is kids ...we had to pull [the children] out of hockey because it cost us so much money...we don’t spoil them like we use to.”

Women expressed concern for their children’s current and future needs.

There was overwhelming evidence to suggest from the interviews that women do not want their children to continue the family farm because “you’re not making any money”. Women wanted their children to become educated so they can leave the farm and have a better life. One farm woman, the eldest of the participants, suggested that not having money “made [the family] really strong and it really brought us close together. Like we did this together you know.” However this same woman indicated that her children had to make do because of the lack of financial resources as indicated in her words:

“I never [worked off the farm]. We had four kids and we talked about it and decided, we wouldn’t buy big expensive things and we wouldn’t charge things up, we would stay within our means and raise our kid and we did. They didn’t suffer, but none of them got a university education, but all of them are doing all right.”

Women have been successful in their endeavors to encourage their children not to farm as evidenced by the lack of their adult children’s choice of careers.

Whilst farm woman understood the importance of the farm as the economic base, farm woman were not willing to sacrifice the well-being of the family to ensure the farm's survival. Women did not have qualms of selling the farm to ensure the family's survival.

“But if it [financial situation] came down to the point where, we couldn't function anymore, we would have to have [money] coming in from somewhere. We can't continue the way we are and keep losing forty thousand dollars a year, we just cannot.”

However, in order to help sustain the farm and their families, farm women went out to work. For some women, off-farm work was a necessity as a result of the ongoing economic crisis. “Dabbling”, was defined, as working for the benefits of “just getting out, and kinda getting a break from the farm”. “Dabbling” was considered acceptable, however, working to sustain the farm was perceived as a threat to the perception of impending farm bankruptcy because “nobody wants to be the generation that loses it [the farm].” Women obtained off-work employment to “help pay the bills, and as well, to spoil them [children]”. Overwhelmingly, women with off-the-farm employment experienced unexpected benefits. Women felt that off-farm employment does not contribute to role overload for farm woman. On the contrary, off-farm employment provided a source of escape as expressed by one woman:

“[Off-farm work] was a social break. It was a sanity break through the BSE, and the trails and tribulations and stuff. It

saved me. I think it [off-farm work] saved me from a nervous breakdown...I don't worry about the what if's, I don't worry about the farm when I am at work."

Spouse's needs.

Farm women expressed concerns about their husband's well-being on the farm. Women felt that their men were suffering because of their inability to adequately provide for the family as result of BSE. As well, farm women felt that their men were unable to recognize the damaging effects of the farm/farmer relationship. One woman's words were reflective of women's general concerns:

"[The farm] is sucking my husband dry"

"He is a source of stress for me in terms of what the impact of farming is on him, because he has always been such a strong and capable man and I've seen him falter, I've seen him afraid, and I never saw that before...and it makes me angry about what [BSE] has been able to do this man."

In summary, the stress associated with the economic crisis on the farm was lived vicariously through women's inability to protect their children and their spouses from adversity. One woman stated that she could "deal with the challenges of farming, better than I can cope with his angst" while another women felt that it was "very hurtful to see somebody as kind as he [spouse] to withdraw inside." Whilst some women were concerned about their husband's psychological well-being, others were concerned about the physical effects of the burden of work (safety concerns, ailments, and health status).

Self as Minder of Women's Inner Voice

The "Self as minder of women's inner voice" was described as women's endeavor to sustain equipoise of the self during changing times. The taxonomy was defined by two cultural attributes. They include: Women as emotional symptom bearer of the family who farms; and women's capacity to manage.

Table VI. Self as minder of women's inner voice

Taxonomy	Description	Cultural Attributes
Self as minder of women's inner voice.	Represents women's endeavor to sustain equipoise of the self during changing times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women as emotional symptom bearer of the family who farms • Women's capacity to manage

During the interviews women presented with a diversity of emotions. Anger, sadness, frustration, hopelessness, guilt are but of the few of the emotions that were expressed. Women cried, and dabbed their eyes, while some women became angry during the interviews. Women felt that although they had strengths to deal with the multiplicity of factors contributing to stress, they also felt that solutions needed to come from policy.

Women as emotional symptom bearer of the family who farms.

Whilst women described different physical, behavioral, and cognitive manifestations of stress, a state of hopelessness was experienced by all women

who had married into the family farm. One woman described her feelings with the following words:

“The kid part of me, the part of me that enjoyed life has left. A part of me has left and I don’t think it is ever coming back.”

Women felt that their apparent lack of control and support on the farm made them feel hopeless. The sense of hopelessness was more pronounced for women whose participation in farming decisions was minimal. Women felt that they would “rather not know”, “to go away from the farm”, “let it ride”, “just forget about it”, “not think about it”, “just want to be left alone”, and “let go of silly dreams” in order to cope.

Women also felt guilty. Guilt was expressed when attempts were made to look after themselves. While women understood the importance of self care, women felt unable to place their own needs as a priority. As a result, women felt indulgent when participating in self care activities. Guilt was expressed by one woman’s words:

“I had to learn that I was doing too much self-care, and [say to myself] wait a minute, whoa, there is a limit. I almost felt like I was over-pampering myself at times.”

The participant labeled as the negative case experienced neither hopelessness, nor guilt. However, the participant became angry because of her perceived inability to deal with the micro and macro level changes in agriculture. The participant’s words describe her abilities:

“I have developed very strong analytical skill so that I don’t look at anything at a superficial level. I just cannot tolerate a powerless situation. I think that it is a real strength to be able to problem solve.”

Women’s capacity to manage.

Women felt that they had the ability to manage and “find their own way out” by taking control, coming together, and finding solutions. One woman in counseling felt strongly that the first step to take control was to be responsible for her emotions as reflected by her words:

“It is my choice to let things bother me, and my emotions belong to me, they are mine. I am making a conscious choice to deal with things differently.”

Women felt that accepting blame started the process of finding ways to cope.

While some women learned through experience as one woman explained:

“Like I’ve learned over the years how to cope. So just as time goes on, I just find different ways. That worked for me for [it] might not work for everybody else. Coping is just evolving.”

Another woman felt that adversity “made me stronger”, while another woman set boundaries for “what I would do and not do” made her feel in control.

Taking control was indicative in one woman’s need for education about stress:

“The main thing is recognizing stress, and be comfortable and secure enough to share your feelings. That it is okay to talk about it.”

Women characterized ‘coming together’ as the supports that farm women have to facilitate coping. On the one hand, some women have supportive spouses that ‘will try and support me in every way he can’. On the other hand, for six out the eight women interviewed that was not the case. One woman described her husband’s lack of support in the following words:

“I guess a part of that has been snubbed out because of lack of his support, and I’ve lost interest in the things that I love...because he does not appreciate it, so why bother.”

Two women without spousal supports have developed their source of support by developing their “own support system...my girlfriends.” However, friends are “not immediate neighbors, they are from a distance away”. The fact that women had a preference for friends outside the immediate vicinity may be indicative that there is a need to remain separate and apart from neighbors. Women felt a need to keep their “dirty laundry at home”. Friends were perceived as “living it [farm life], they [friends] know what it’s like and they understand, and [it help get] the stuff [stress] off your chest.”

Some women felt that managing could be encouraged by “building capacity”, and “I would like to see more strength within to bring us together as a common [place] almost like a religion, that the community might build itself”. Informal supports such as women’s group where “a bunch of women gather who

live in the community and then of course you talk farming together” may be helpful. However, the “trust factor” remained a problem for some women to feel safe. Women strongly felt that services should be delivered by “women who are involved in it up to their necks because they are the only ones that can understand.” These services should also be provided face-to-face “by someone outside the community”. Women felt that solutions to dealing with the “root causes” of stress needed to be found. Finding solutions for one woman meant that “farmers have to start rowing forward in the same direction [to obtain their goal]. While another woman felt that public education was required “to get those stressors on the table and make people aware of them”.

All women felt that help was required for the male farmer to finding “practical solutions to the problems that we’re having”. Practical solutions included those provided by Agricultural representatives of the area, and “rethinking government policies that [subsidies] are chronic, and debilitating.”

“I could go for a massage, and that would feel good at the time. But we need to deal with the root causes of it [stress].”

Generally, women felt that by helping the men, and the farm that the benefits would filter down to women as a result of the vicariousness of the stress experience.

Conceptual Framework

To help elucidate the key components of the theory in relation to women’s ‘whole’ stress experience, a diagram of the theory was developed (Figure 1). The

“Self as mediator of cultural duality in changing times” and the four taxonomies are illustrated (Figure 1).

‘Self as invisible agent of the way of life’ is represented by the small inner circle. The inner circle represents the farm woman aggregate. The aggregate was placed in the centre to illustrate that the stress experience began with women’s lived realities of their every day life. The inner circle rests on a control line to demonstrate that women’s perception of loss of control traversed from the everyday lived experiences to the micro and macro level factors. The control line represents the ‘Self as mediator of cultural duality in changing times’.

‘Self as minder of women’s inner voice’ is represented by a triangle. The small triangle represents women’s ability to manage. The triangle was strategically placed to illustrate the precariousness of women’s ability to manage and balance their lived reality within the broader social context.

Self as cognizant agent of changing times is represented by the middle and outer circle (Figure 1). The inner circle represents micro level changes at the family, farm, and community level. While the larger circle represented the macro-level changes (economic, social, and political). The short arrows on the lines of the middle and larger circle represented movement (changing times). The longer arrows intersecting from the macro-level root causes, through the micro-level factors, to the farm women aggregate represented the impacts of determinants of health. The context of the study can be defined as being post-Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE).

Self as subservient nurturing agent of family was represented on the inner micro-level circle (Figure 1). The family represented the woman's nurturing role as being impacted by the broader macro-level forces.

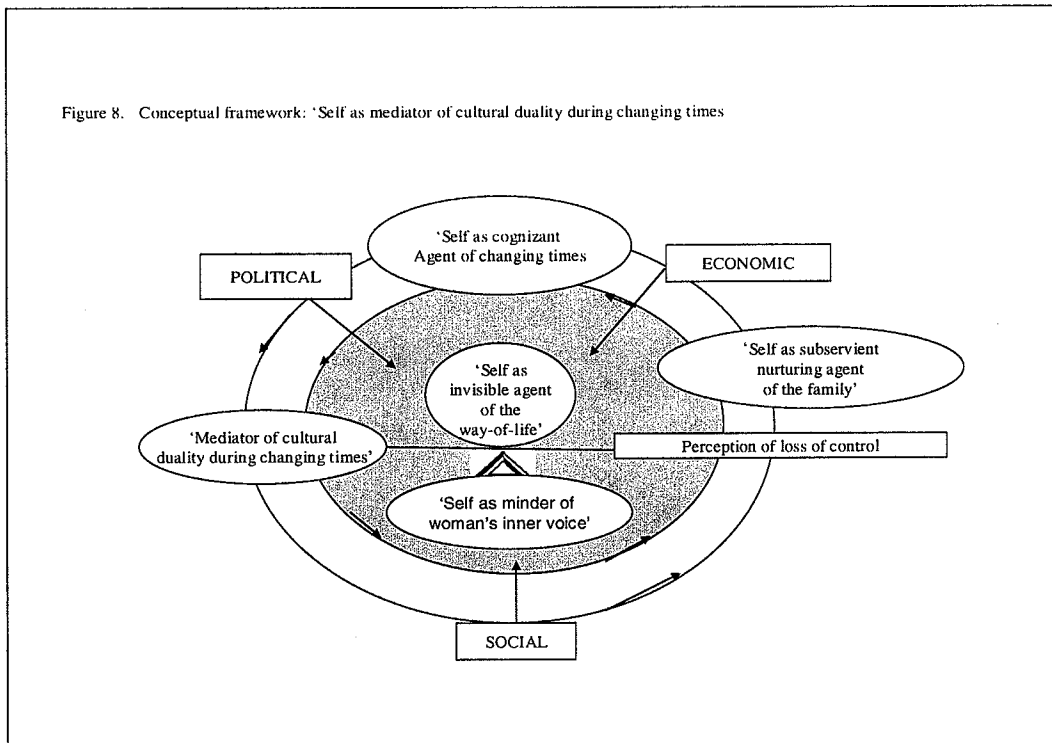


Figure 1. Conceptual framework: Self as mediator of cultural duality in changing time

Summary

In summary, this chapter presented a description of the setting, demographic information, and the ethnography. The central theme was identified as the 'Self as mediator of cultural duality in changing times'. The central theme was supported by four taxonomies. They include: 'Self as invisible agent of the way-of-life'; 'Self as cognizant agent of changing times'; 'Self as subservient

nurturing agent of the family'; 'Self as minder of women's inner voice'. Farm women interviewed live a cultural duality. The cultural duality was reflected by farm women's testimony of inconsistent experiences on the farm. While women expressed feelings of pride, freedom, and independence they also told stories characterizing oppression. Women's stories reflected powerlessness, and sacrifice as demonstrated by the perceived lack of information and control, token decision making, hard and invisible work, lack of leisure time, and lack of trust. The greatest challenge for farm women centers on meeting her own and the needs of her family within a traditional male dominated values and beliefs system, while enduring the micro and macro challenges associated with the BSE crisis. A discussion of the findings and practice, policy, and research pathways are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATION

The ensuing chapter presents a discussion of the new study findings. Emergent insights and concept definitions are identified. The appropriateness of the study design, and theoretical underpinning are presented and situated in the literature. Recommendations for practice, research, and policy are presented.

Discussion

The Central Theme

A central theme was identified. The rationale for developing a broad central theme was to substantiate the researcher's belief that women's stress experiences could not be understood by eviscerating the parts from the whole. Whilst some cultural attributes were corroborated by Canadian literature (Appendix Q), others were new and could not be substantiated. The following discussion will situate the new knowledge within the context of the known literature.

The taxonomies represented how women think, feel, and behave on the farm as 'lived through' the stress experiences. Whilst the taxonomies demonstrated different aspects of women's stress experiences on the farm they are connected by the perceived impacts of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE) crisis. The two central factors associated with women's stress experiences were the economic impacts, and women's perception of being out of control.

Economic Impacts of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Historically farms, farm women, and their families have endured periods of severe economic downturns as part of Canadian farming (Gordon & Plain, 1995; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Lind, 1995; van de Vorst, 2002; Walker Schubert & Walker, 1987). Farm women and their families have lived with the knowledge that the farm as a capitalist institution receives funding and familial primacy (Gerrard, 2000). The findings of the study will be discussed in the context of the severe economic crisis that struck Manitoba beef farmers as a result of the 2003 Canadian BSE crisis.

In May 2003, a six year old cow was diagnosed with BSE in Alberta. BSE was a fatal degenerative disease that affected the central nervous system of cattle. BSE was caused by the recycling of animal protein in ruminant feed ((Labrecque & Charlebois, 2005). The announcement ignited an industry wide crisis whereby Canadian beef and cattle exports abruptly ceased (Labrecque & Charlebois, 2005). BSE has been linked to Cretzfeldt-Jacob disease, the human variant of the illness. As result, the selling price of Canadian beef dwindled and created socio-economic and political havoc (Labrecque & Charlebois, 2005). The aggregate and socio-cultural impacts of BSE are discussed.

Aggregate impacts.

Approximately three years after the BSE crisis, the study participants faced and dealt with economic hardships in ways that the literature had previously explicated. Participants altered there spending habits (Gerrard, 2000; van de Vorst, 2002), worked harder (Gallagher & Delworth, 1993; Heather, et al., 2005;

Kubik & Moore 2001; Roberts & Falk, 2004, Walker & Walker, 1987), and reduced the amount of leisure time (Rosenblatt & Anderson, 1981; Walker & Walker). Similar to Saskatchewan farm and rural women, the farm women interviewed recognized the farming male dominated traditional value system, the gendered division and invisible nature of their work contributions (Gerrard, 2000b; McGee, 1983). Daughter-in-laws, like the women in this study were negatively affected by the context of the family farm (Gerrard, 2000b).

Raising consciousness of the impacts of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE) crisis for the farm women aggregate appeared to have caused a reappraisal of many values and beliefs that had previously been taken for granted. The farm women interviewed appeared to have less faith, and trust in their spouse, and in the farm's capacity to provide for the family. They questioned their mate's attachment to the farm, authority, and decision making. Women also had an acute awareness that the farm could not provide the things that they considered important. Farm women questioned the whole notion of the farm-way-of -life, and its continuance. Women felt that their current needs were not being met, and were doubtful about future need fulfillment.

The aggregate felt powerless to influence the dramatic economic changes brought on by BSE. Women placed the needs of their children, the spouse, and the farm above their own individual needs (Heather, et al., 2005; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Roberts & Falk, 2004). As caregivers of the family, the aggregate developed a patterned emotional response to the crisis. Women worried. As emotional symptom bearer of the farm family's economic stress, women displayed a myriad of

emotions (guilt, anger, worry, and hopelessness) as a result of the economic impacts of BSE. American women have been described as the symptom bearer of their family's health (Stein, 1982). This phenomenon had not been previously described in the Canadian literature. Women reported traditional individual coping strategies were ineffective. This finding was consistent with the work done by Meyer and Lobao (2003) that found that traditional coping methods (denial, support seeking, comparing oneself to others, having a plan, and hoping for a miracle) exacerbated stress when dealing with macro-level changes.

In particular, women were concerned about the impacts of the economic strains on their spouses. In this study, farm women experienced their spouse's stress vicariously. The primary source of stress for men is the economics of the farm (Walker & Walker, 1988). While past literature findings suggested that farm men's stress symptom levels were more likely to be impacted by financial distress and women by familial issues, this was not entirely correct in the context of this study (Walker & Walker, 1988; Parry, et al., 2005). Findings from this study suggested that women adversely experience economic distress through their spouses. As such, economic impacts and the development of stress are disquieting because it may affect both husbands and wives equally. Therefore, this may provide an explanation as to why farm women experience greater stress symptoms (Booth, 2000; Brown, 1998; Dreary, Wilcock & McGregor, 1997, Walker & Walker, 1987). Farm women must deal with their familial care giving roles, while vicariously enduring the economic hardship of the farm/farmer.

Socio-cultural impacts.

The farm women aggregate was cognizant of the far reaching economic impacts of the BSE crisis. The economic hardships had a rippling effect from the farm gate to the rural community. The impacts identified by the aggregate ranged from women's nurturing role (spouse and family), to children's behaviors in school, to the increased burden of work on the farm (reduced leisure time, increased expenses to deal with a greater number of cattle), to community losses (increased vulnerability).

The aggregate blamed ineffective government policies, the media, and society for the misconstruction of the crisis. The economic, social, and political factors identified have been found to be major contributory factors to farm stress (Dreary, Wilcock, & McGregor, 1997; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Gerrard, 2000; Meyer & Lobao, 2003; McGhee, 1983; Thurston, et al., 2003; Walker & Walker, 1988). In this study, women felt that the government mismanaged the border closures, and missed opportunities to become less dependent on the United States. The media's inaccurate portrayal and sensational representations of the problems faced by people who farm were found to be detrimental to the aggregate's sense of worth. The aggregate felt misunderstood by urban populations. The farm women interviewed felt that society did not value farmer's contributions to food production.

The taxing impact of socio-environmental demands can be substantiated, in part, by Aneshensel (1992) Social Stress Theory. As well, Pearlin (1989)

suggests that the broader social, economic and political context should also be considered in the determination of stress

There is a paucity of Canadian literature to explicate the overwhelming impact that the BSE crisis has had, and continues to have on women, farm families, and their communities. While work has been done from a marketing perspective (Labrecque & Charlebois, 2005), the human impacts have not been addressed.

Women's Perception of Being out of Control

Common to all the taxonomies is the perception of lack of control. The aggregate's perception of low levels of control was based on their supportive rather than partnering roles on the farm. Women who married into the family farm reported not having input on decision making at home, and on the farm. As well, the aggregate felt powerless to control the rippling economic effects of BSE. The farm women interviewed, with the exception of the negative case, had off-farm low-level farm work where the level of control would be minimal. Therefore, for these farm women, the perception of control was minimal at home, on the farm, and at work.

The existing farm stress literature does not corroborate this finding. However, Folkman (1984) suggested that beliefs of control and commitment are influential in the appraisal of stress and subsequent coping. Situational factors, where a person has no control may be interpreted as a threat or harm (Lazarus, 1984). As well, people with low perceived levels of control at home, or at home have increased risk of developing depression and anxiety (Griggen, Fuhrer,

Stansfeld, & Marmot, 2002). The perceived low level and/or lack of control may have had an impact on how women defined stress in the study. The aggregate defined stress as worry.

Study participants felt they had the ability to manage by taking control, coming together, and finding solutions. These findings are substantiated by Gerrard's (2000) resiliency work with farm and rural people.

New Concept Definitions

New definitions for the concept terms emerged through data analysis. Culture, farm, farm women, stress, stress experience will be defined.

Culture

The concept culture and 'way of life' became synonymous within the scope of the study. The 'way of life' is characterized by the values, beliefs, and practices of the people who farm. The definition may illustrate why people who farm do not characterize the farm as a business. As a result, the farm provides both an economic and cultural base. For women, the 'way of life' is dominated by the dominant male culture. The farm as a social construction is similar to how some Alberta farm women viewed the farm (Heather, et al., 2005).

Farm

The concept "farm" was defined as an agricultural operation that produced beef and grain for the intended purpose of sale. The definition is consistent with the definition provided by government sources (Statistic Canada, 2001).

However, the farmers in this study were unable to sell their livestock due to the international border closures. As a result, farms became overstocked with

animals. The grain produced was marketed but yielded little return on the investment. Therefore, within the scope of the study women defined a farm as an operation “that was a lot of work for little return”.

Farm Woman

The concept farm woman is a woman who operates a farm and or is married to a farm operator, regardless of age (Statistic Canada, 1999). In the context of this study, farm woman identified themselves as ‘good farm women’ whose contributions were invisible, and not valued. This is reflected by women’s perceived lack of opportunity to plan, organize, problems solve, and control decisions made on the farm. Women’s definition of the concept of farm woman is reflective of a supportive, rather than an operative role.

Stress

Seyle’s broad definition of stress was used as foundational to the study. However, women defined stress as “worry”. “Worry” is an emotional response that may follow the cognitive appraisal of stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the context of this study, women were expected to anticipate the lows of farming and as a result were in a constant state of alert. This constant state of alert may cause women to skip the appraisal of stressors and be in a constant state of emotional upheaval.

Stress Experience

The stress experience was a concept term that had not been defined in the literature. A portrait of farm women’s stress experiences emerged through data analysis. From a biomedical perspective, the study findings indicated that stress

is an individual experience in relation to the host susceptibility, stressors, coping, adaptation, and stress responses at a physical, psychological, and cognitive level (Aneshensel, 1992; Lazarus & Folkman 1984; Seyle, 1993). The farm stress literature reflects these individual differences by using a variety of quantitative statistical analysis to enhance the generalizability of their findings (Kubik & Moore 2001; Walker & Walker, 2001; Thurston, Blundell-Gosselin & Rose, 2003). The stress experiences of the aggregate in this study may be explicated by the similarities in patterned emotional responses. The factors causing the emotional response are lack of control, and root factors (context) of farm women's stress experiences.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Feminist Socialist Theory (Ardonovi-Brooker, 2002) selected to guide the research process was instrumental to the discovery of farm women's cultural knowledge of their stress experiences. The theory had not previously been used in Canadian farm stress studies. As a result, the cultural knowledge of the farm woman's aggregate may have been silenced within the male dominated values and beliefs. The theoretical underpinning was influential in the identification of new gendered insights of the stress experience. The feminine values and beliefs became evident as a result of numerous researcher/participant contacts.

During the preliminary phase of taxonomic identification, the only emergent pattern was conflict. Conflicting information was common within the scope of the interviews, between interviews, and through the photographic representations of the stress experiences. Conflict had previously been described

in the women's farm stress literature in relation to role conflict (Walker Schubert & Walker, 1987), role incongruence (Berkovitz & Hedlund, 1979), and role overload (Jaffe & Blackey, 2000; Kubik & Moore, 2001; Roberts & Falk, 2004). Although the findings were tenable within the scope of the available literature, the findings were not overwhelmingly suitable within the lived experiences of the women in the study, and of the Principal Investigators.

A return to the data, specifically at the domain level, revealed an oversight. During the identification of the domains, the gendered experiences of both the wife and the husband had been meshed together. A separation of the domains between the wife and the husband's reality of the stress experiences revealed gendered differences. Women had assimilated the dominant and feminine realities. As a result, women were unable to separate the two realities, because they live both realities.

The standpoint of both realities emerged while women talked of their roles, the economic situations, and their way-of-life. Each participant had an average of six contacts with the Principal Investigator. With each contact, awareness of the feminine reality grew thus the recognition that women are not in a state of conflict, but in a state of duality. Farm women's 'lived through' stress experiences were, in part, fostered by the cultural duality while attempting to find control during changing times.

Study Design

A qualitative, ethnographic design using in-depth interviews, and photovoice was the ideal choice to understand how farm women structure and

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Study Design

A qualitative, ethnographic design using in-depth interviews, and photovoice was the ideal choice to understand how farm women structure and

give meaning to their daily lives (Berg, 2004). During the depths of the interviews women felt safe to disclose the experiences of the every day lived experiences within a personal, social, economic and political arena. Trust building established through repeated contact, and the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity were paramount in understanding how farm women thought, believed, and behaved. The mini-focused approach was appreciated by the participants because involvement in the study was fairly short (3 months). In itself, the length of involvement was a significant factor in the retention of the participants. A three month commitment was attainable because the study was undertaken just prior to the calving season. However, further contacts may have provided addition time to delve into greater depths of the farm women's dual realities.

Practice, Policy, and Research Pathways

The opportunity, to legitimize women's lived experiences of stress, provided consciousness rising of the cultural duality of farm women's existence. The importance of the changing face of the family, farm, and community while enduring the broad shifting uncontrollable root causes of stress (social, economic, and political) has been paramount to understanding the stress experiences at the aggregate level. Control is mediated by the aggregate's capacity. The study's generated knowledge has provided illuminating practice, policy, and research pathways. The pathways will be explicated and grounded in the literature.

Practice Pathways

The generated knowledge has revealed specific practice pathways for public health nurses, community and community mental health nurses. The study findings illustrate the need for aggregate focused interventions. Currently, most interventions and programming decisions to deal with the stress experience are individually based. Care is provided by a variety of private and publicly funded face-to-face and telephone counseling services. Although valuable, these programs are founded on the assumption that the individual must accept the blame for recurrent stress experiences. Meyer and Lobao (2003) suggest that individual counseling is ineffectual when dealing with macro-level changes. Given the evidence suggesting the contributive nature of the root factors, it is imperative that 'upstream thinking', dominant future programming decisions. One way of achieving 'upstream thinking' would be by applying the Primary Health Care framework (Stewart, 2000).

Primary Health Care

The social re-conceptualization of the stress experience requires an approach that addresses the broad determinant of health while providing individual and community level care. One way of achieving this would be by applying the Primary Health Care (PHC) framework. PHC is the foundation of community health nurse's practice (Stewart, 2000). The World Health Organization (1978) defined PHC as a distinct approach to viewing health care. The approach is guided by five key principles including: universal access to health care services, focus on health determinants, active individual and

community participation in decision that affect their health and life, interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration for health, use of appropriate knowledge (empirical and experiential learning, technology and resources), with a focus on health promotion/illness prevention during the entire life span, while incorporating knowledge of the socio-political-economic environment (Community Health Nurses Association of Canada, 2003). In summary “Primary Health Care addresses, the wellness and “health problems within a community, from a community perspective” (Edwards, 2005, p. 2). Community development is the cornerstone of the Population Health Promotion Model (Hamilton & Bhatti, 1996). Empowerment and community development are two essential components of dealing with stress at the aggregate level.

Empowerment.

Empowerment is a broad and abstract term (Kuokkanen & Leino-Kilpi, 2000). The definition based on the critical social theory espouses “that people are capable of self-reflection and that all people have a basic need to act independently” (Kuokkanen & Leino-Kilpi, 2000, p. 237). Empowerment, as a strategy for change is considered as a way to enhance farm women’s position, power, and opportunities in farming (Pettersen & Solbakken, 1998). Oppressed groups, such as farm women are controlled by traditional rural male dominated social institutions. Power and empowerment are social and political phenomena that can be enhanced by a community development approach. Collaboration, partnerships, mutual respect, trust, equality of worth, and a focus on women strengths and capacities are essential values and assumptions underlying

empowerment strategies that may improve the female farm quality of life (Pettersen & Solbakken, 1998). A commitment to equal power relations with farm women should be fostered by providing gender specific programming.

Community development.

Agreement has not been reached on a unified definition of community (Patrick & Wickizer, 1995), but in this case, community is described as the aggregate of farm women in the province of Manitoba. Community development is a strategy used to facilitate a community's efforts to establish its goals and take steps to achieve positive change (Battle Haugh & Mildon, 2004). Community development involves macro health promotion strategies directed at addressing the broad determinants of health (Battle Haugh & Mildon, 2004). It is a strategy that "gives the power of the few to the many" (Gerrard, 1998, p. 208). Gerrard (1998) describes community development as a holistic, community based, and sustainable activist strategy that represents inclusion, equality, sharing, mutual respect and empowerment where the community has ownership of the problem. Lassiter (1992) agrees that community development is essential in dealing with complex rural health issues. The Rural Quality of Life Program (RQLP) is community development program that has its origin in Saskatchewan. The community psychology program has been shown beneficial in rural Saskatchewan and may provide an effective strategy for dealing with farm women stress experiences.

The Rural Quality of Life Program. A community development approach was chosen in Saskatchewan to address farm stress because numerous physical

and social barriers to accessing mental health services exist in rural areas (Gerrard, 1998). These rural barriers are apparent in the reviewed farm and rural stress literature. For Gerrard (1998) a stepwise process or pathway provided guidance in doing community development. The logic model pathway involved a needs assessment, interest, involvement, ownership, commitment, and collaboration. Needs are defined as the gap between what is and what could or should be and are determined through a needs assessment. The goals (collaboration), objectives (who, what, where, when, and how), and subsequent evaluation are also determined by the needs assessment. The rural quality of life program (RQLP) was developed and based on a needs assessment. The program name was selected by those involved in the needs assessment who emphasized the program should not be called a farm stress program (Gerrard, 2000).

The program by design is a community owned, controlled, and incrementally developed in learning-by-doing model (Gerrard, 1998). The program addresses individualism, paternalism, lack of empowerment, lack of trust, the need for hope, and the fear of stigma which were themes revealed in the needs assessment. The program has three components that include on-site education, facilitation of mutual aid groups, community organizing and advocacy and a resource base.

Gerrard (1998) found the community development approach effective in building informal partnerships, reducing the mental health stigma, encouraging community participation, and fostering intersectoral collaboration, while working as a 'generalist'. However, community development remains an unconventional

model of mental health services delivery and is still not readily accepted as an alternative approach (Gerrard, 1998). Uncertain outcomes, sharing of power, time and energy required, skills of the individual developer in cultivating relationships and partnerships, and lack of public confidence of its capabilities are limitations associated with using the approach. There is also a perceived unwillingness, and lack of cooperation among government sectors, agencies, networks, and systems to address the economic, social, and political systems required to redress this complex and multi-faceted problem. Another limitation of the approach is its focus on the 'walking wounded well' which implies that the approach does not meet the needs of ill clients (Gerrard, 1998).

According to Gerrard (1998) the community development approach provides a fresh new way to deal with stress on the farm. Addressing people's needs within their own social context helps to build resiliency which is vital to transforming victims into change agents within their own families, and communities.

Policy Pathways

The policy pathways centre on the government's integration of the concepts and principles of the Primary Health Care (PHC) framework in all policy decisions. Integration of the PHC principles would provide the structural supports required to facilitate the change of focus from an individual to community based approach to dealing with stress. A means by which this may be accomplished is through the government's adoption of the Population Health Promotion Model,

and representation of the farm woman's voice at the policy table to guide a 'bottom-up' approach to policy decisions.

The Population Health Promotion Model

The Population Health Promotion (PHP) is a non-nursing, action model that represents a merger of two distinct approaches: population health and health promotion (Hamilton & Bhatti, 1996). PHP model is an inductive, interdisciplinary, and inter-sectoral macro-theory that espouses to understand and identify the root causes of health, and facilitate and direct actions to improve health. The authors suggest the model characterizes and integrates the Canadian health paradigm shift where population health may be achieved by applying principles of social justice and equity, and encouraging community and societal participation in caring for all its' members. Evidence-based decision making through research and experience blends the art and science of promoting, maintaining, and improving individual, family, community, and population health.

Political will is needed to address underlying health determinants (socio-cultural, political, economic), contributing to the stress response. Supportive intersectoral government economic policies would provide the stability, with which, capacity to effectively cope, and adapt would prevent the stress response from occurring. An averted stress response may prevent behaviour problems (drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, suicide, accidental injury), and the eventual development of physiological and psychological diseases associated with the

stress response. In conclusion, the issue of stress among farm women is an issue requiring a population health approach.

Representation of women's voice at the policy table

The generated knowledge from the study has shown women to be voiceless and invisible, whose control is usurped in a male dominated value system. However, in order for women's voices to be heard, within a pluralistic model of public policy (Skogstad, 2005), they must organize in groups. Women's groups may have the opportunity to help redefine, and re-conceptualize the stress experience thereby facilitating new policy options, and formations. However farm women's groups must have the knowledge to influence change. As such, women's groups must form strong liaisons with each other and present a united voice.

Women's groups.

Participation in rural women's organizations has been found to be especially beneficial for women because they provide informal supports (Bushy, 1991; Liepert, 1999; PWCHE, 2003). Members of the study's aggregate had mixed feelings about participation in women's groups. Women's apprehension may be reflective of a lack of awareness of the far reaching effects and benefits of group membership. In Manitoba, there are several informal church groups, and few organized women's groups but they are not equally available and accessible to women. The Manitoba Women's Institute (MWI) is an issue orientated group who has only one special interest and that is to improve the lives of women and in turn, their families and their communities (Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural

Initiatives, 2001). MWI operates under an act of the Manitoba Legislature, the Women's Institute Act of 1930. According to its Constitution and Bylaws its purpose is to: unite all members and coordinate its work throughout the province; express its members' view on matters of provincial, national and international importance; cooperate with the Province to improve educational, social and economic conditions; develop better informed, more responsible citizens; and provide official representation at the national and international MWI organizations (Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives, 2001b).

MWI is represented on the provincial agricultural organizational chart (Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives, 2001a). In the past, the state has provided monies to the organization, hence, allowing the organization to have influence in the policy arena. However, MWI only represents their member's interests. The organization does not claim to represent all farm and rural women, and families (V. Watt, personal communication, February 20th, 2005). MWI's voice is a reflection of those women who are able to pay the \$35.00 annual membership fee. Therefore, marginalized farm women and their family's needs may not be heard.

Another group receiving agriculture sector funding includes the Southwest Farm Women's Network. This group is not a lobby group (J. Baker, personal communication, January 18, 2005) but a group of farm women volunteers who through various activities seek to improve the lives of farm women, their families and communities (Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives, 2003).

In the past, the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress (MFRSL) have liaised with these women's groups. The MFRSL should pursue a collaborative relationship with rural women's groups to ensure women's voice is present at the policy table when an opportunity arises to redefine policy options. However, because the MFRSL's target group is the male farmer, it remains questionable as to the quality of the alliance between women's groups and MFRSL staff.

The media.

The media could have a large role to play in re-conceptualizing farm women's stress experiences (Lobley, et al. 2004). Farmers, and vicariously all people associated with the farm have been perceived as victims. As such, the negative tone, and strong language used in media reports may have impacted the public perceptions of agriculture and vicariously the people who farm by perpetuating the "victim mentality". The MFRSL are already continually being solicited for information on rural and farm stress. Through media interviews, program staff could help to redefine the stress experience to the general public. The process of socially contextualizing stress may allow farm and rural people to stop blaming themselves for their situation (Gerrard, 2000). The redefinition could help shift the image of victim to one of strength.

Research Pathways

The evidence generated from this study has provided new insights into farm women's cultural stress experiences. These insights were previously absent from the literature. The study is a preliminary attempt to re-conceptualize the stress experiences so that the intervention shift from a client-centered approach to

a population based intervention. There is an opportunity for future research within the farm women aggregate that involve women at the grassroots level.

A Healthy Community Assessment

A healthy community assessment (Hancock & Minkler, 1997) is the next step to understanding and discovering women's lived experience of stress in Manitoba. The healthy community assessment incorporates the concepts of the Primary Health Model (Hancock & Minkler, 1997). The approach places emphasis on expert lay knowledge, community involvement, and that the return of community assessment data to the people. The approach is consistent with the importance of lay knowledge, focus on strength, and community participation as outlined in the Primary Health Care model. The study would include: farm women from various Regional Health Authority within Manitoba, a variety of stakeholders, and care givers. The ultimate goal of the community assessment would further illuminate knowledge underpinning program development, implementation, and implementation, policy development, and ultimately rural community development. A study of this nature and scope has not been conducted in Manitoba. Specifically, knowledge gleaned from the proposed assessment will assist health care providers to confirm the felt, expressed, normative, and comparative stress needs of the aggregate (Bradshaw, 1972).

National Study

A larger study is required to understand the root causes of farm women's stress experiences provincially and national. A farm stress study of national calibre is required because agricultural policy decisions are made at the federal

government level. As such, a national study would provide the evidence required to develop supports for a federally intersectoral funded stress health program.

A multi-site study would also be useful to substantiate a model the Farm Women's Stress Experience Model, and to further explore the human impacts of macro-level crisis situations, and the impact of housing quality on women's perceived well-being.

Dissemination of Findings

Dissemination of the study findings is ongoing. Knowledge gleaned from the study belongs to the group being studied (Hancock & Minkler, 1997). These authors suggest that "knowledge is power and is therefore a component of empowerment (Hancock & Minkler p. 141). A written report using a grade five English level will be sent to every participant who requested a copy. This report will also be sent to the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line (MFRSL). The MFRSL has agreed to post a summary of the findings on their client based website at www.ruralstress.ca . Presentations will be given to rural women's groups upon request. A summary report will be sent to the PWCHE, the MWI, and the Central Regional Health Authority and the Minister of Agriculture. The PWCHE has posted a copy of the abstract and CIHR poster on their web site. With the help of the thesis advisor, the author will attempt to publish the findings in an academic health journal.

Limitations of the study

Limitations are potential weaknesses of a study (Creswell, 2003).

Specifically, the data collection strategies, participant recall and the researcher as the research instrument will be discussed as potential limitations.

A primary limitation of the study is the lack of generalizability of the stories told by the Southern Manitoba Farm Women who participated in this study. Their stories may not be reflective of other Manitoba farm women's stress experiences. However, the findings from this study can provide the impetus for further research.

The researcher as the research instrument may be a limitation to the study. The researcher was a novice to ethnography and as such Klienman (1992) suggests that this may have an impact on data collection and findings of the study. This limitation was minimized through the ethnographic expertise of the Thesis Advisor.

The researcher as a farm woman may potentially be viewed as an insider with preconceived 'emic' perspectives. These characteristics may lead to selective observations that can lead to premature closure and loss of critical perspectives. Thus, critics of the study may believe that the interpretation of the data is biased (Newman, 2000). However, care was taken to identify personal assumptions at the study's onset and throughout the process through reflexive notes.

Summary

A discussion of the central theme and supportive taxonomies overwhelmingly revealed the importance of their cultural duality, and the economic impacts caused by the BSE crisis. The powerlessness and lack of control resulting from the traditional patriarchal values and beliefs, and the economic impacts have led to a reappraisal of the farm-way-of life. The farm women aggregate are still reeling in the aftermath of BSE.

The feminist socialist theory guided the discovery of farm women's cultural knowledge of their stress experience. The theory provided the foundation in the identification of the farm women's dual cultural realities. Segregation of the gendered cultural experiences was facilitated by the prolonged time spent in the field. The prolonged time spend in the field contributed to raising consciousness of the feminine values and beliefs. As a result, patterns of conflict were redefined as a lived cultural duality during changing times.

The generated knowledge has illuminated practice, policy and research pathways. The social conceptualization requires a Primary Health Care (PCH) approach. PCH is a guiding approach ensuring equity and social justice in the provision of health care. Empowerment and community development are two health promotion interventions that could be especially useful to deal with farm women's stress experiences.

Policy pathways centre on the government's integration of the PHC principles through the adoption of the Population Health Promotion Model in

guiding health policy. A bottom-up approach, involving farm women and the media, is imperative to bringing farm women's voice to the policy table.

Future research pathways include as a healthy community assessment and a national study to enlighten program development, implementation, and evaluation of provincial programming, and federally intersectoral funded health promotion program. Dissemination of findings and study limitations of the study were presented and discussed.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a pervasive issue that can potentially affect all aspects of society. There was evidence to suggest that farm women were particularly vulnerable to the effects of stress. Based on personal reflexive and literature based assumptions, the overall purpose and research question were developed. In short, the proposed study sought to answer what cultural knowledge guides Manitoba farm women in conceptualizing their stress experiences.

A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to inform the proposed farm women's stress study. It became apparent that there are many salient issues that may have an effect on the day-to-day realities of farm women's lives. Consistently, farm women experienced higher levels of stress responses in comparison to their male counterparts. However, the available literature did not explicate the reasons for this phenomenon. A review of multiple stress theories proved effective in broadening the researcher's understanding of the stress concept and subsequently provided a foundation for domain analysis.

A feminist orientated, mini-focused critical ethnographic qualitative approach was selected to answer the research question. Ethical considerations including ethical approval, informed consent, and voluntary withdrawal ensured participant protection during one face to face guided interview, and one participant-led interview. The interview questions were developed from theory, literature, and intuition. The prolonged time spent in the field was effective in fostering participant trust, disclosure and rapport.

Recruitment strategies yielded a homogeneous group of farm woman. A negative case was identified and was used to substantiate the findings. Rigor, ensuring validity and reliability in the study, were built-in from the projects inception to the study's conclusion. The written ethnography included thick descriptions and verbatim quotations. The limitations of the proposed study were identified, but the richness of the data was not affected.

The study findings provided an understanding and discovery of the unique cultural attributes that shape women's stress experiences on the farm. Triangulation of interview transcript, field notes, reflective journals, and photographs facilitated the identification of a central cultural theme and conceptual model development. The ethnography (taxonomies, cultural attributes, componential analysis) presented the cultural knowledge that guided farm women aggregate in the conceptualization of their stress experiences. The economic crisis post-BSE and the perception of minimal control in their lives were foundational to the aggregates stress experiences.

Practice, policy, and research pathways were identified. Practice pathways guided by the Primary Health Care (PHC) framework will ensure appropriate aggregate level interventions are developed. In particular, empowerment and community development strategies were presented as potential favourable alternatives. Policy pathways centre on the government's full integration of the PHC principles through the adoption of the Population Health Promotion Model as a guide to health policy development. A bottom-up approach was suggested as a means to have stress redefined by women's voices

and the media. Future research strategies include: a healthy community assessment, and an exploration of farm men and women in various farming operations, the human impacts of macro-level 'crisis' situations, and the impact of housing quality on women's perceived well-being. Dissemination of the study findings are in progress.

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September 14, 2005

Simone Reisch

Dear Ms. Reisch,

We are pleased to endorse your study on farm women and stress. We will gladly assist you in your research by recruiting potential research participants, and helping to disseminate the results. Your research on the lived experiences of farm women is of the utmost importance, and we look forward to assisting you in whatever way we can.

Sincerely,

Janet Smith
Program Manager

toll free 1-866-367-3276 1-866-F08-FARM
Mailing address: 3RD Floor - 340 9th Street Brandon, MB, R7A-6C2
business phone: 204-571-4182 fax: 571-4184 www.ruralstress.ca email: info@ruralstress.mb.ca

Appendix B

Letter of Support



PRAIRIE WOMEN'S HEALTH

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

RESEARCH • POLICY • COMMUNITY

November 4, 2005

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE
56 The Promenade
Winnipeg, MB R3B 3H9

P: 204.982.6630
F: 204.982.6637
E: pwfce@uwinnipeg.ca
W: www.pwfce.ca

REGINA SITE
University of Regina Extension
C9309, College Ave. & Scarth St.
Regina, SK S4S 0A2

P: 306.565.5727
F: 306.565.5552
E: pwfce@uregina.ca

SASKATOON SITE
University of Saskatchewan
107 Wiggins Rd.
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E5

P: 306.966.8658
F: 306.966.7920
E: pwfce@usask.ca

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

FÉDÉRATION PROVINCIALE
DES FRANSAKOISES

PRAIRIE REGION HEALTH
PROMOTION RESEARCH CENTRE,
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINIC

Dear Ms. Reinsch,

Re: Funding for transcriber for the project:
**UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL MEANINGS AND
PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTHERN MANITOBA FARM WOMEN'S
STRESS EXPERIENCES.**

I am writing to confirm that Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence is interested in contributing to this project by making funds available to cover some of the costs for transcriptions, to a cap of \$2250.

Mental health issues continue to arise and be identified by rural woman as needing critical attention. With recent changes and reforms in health service delivery, care specific for mental health may not be available as needed to women. Furthermore the pressing economic farm crises are causing unprecedented stress for women who farm and their families.

Projects such as yours can help illuminate women's specific mental health needs so that programs and services can be tailored to their needs more effectively when resources are limited.

I look forward to hearing more about the development of your project, and I wish you well with it.

Sincerely,

Margaret J. Haworth-Brockman
Executive Director

Appendix C

Initial Contact Statement (Recruiter)

There is an opportunity for you to participate in a research project that is looking at the stress experience. Simone Reinsch is a nurse and researcher who is doing a study for her Masters of Nursing degree and is looking for women who are experiencing stress on the farm. Simone is willing to explain her project to you, should you be interested. This does not mean you have to participate, she will only explain the project and you can decide if it is something you would want to take part in.

Would it be okay for me to give your name and phone number to Simone so that she can set up a time to meet with you and explain her project?

If **YES**, please fill out the information below:

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Simone will contact you at the phone number given in the next few days.

If **NO**, caller thanks the person for their time and concludes the call.

Appendix D

An Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

for

Farm Women (18-50) who are Having Stress Experiences

In Southern Manitoba.

- Farm women in Southern Manitoba who are having stress experiences are invited to participate in a research project.
- **The research project is about finding out what it feels like to live with stress on the farm.**
- Your participation is completely voluntary.

This research is being conducted by Simone Reinsch, a graduate student in the Faculty of Nursing, at the University of Manitoba. The Chair of the Research Committee is Dr. Roberta Woodgate, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing, at the University of Manitoba. She may be reached at 1-204-474-8338. The project is endorsed by the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line.

Appendix E

Follow-up Letter to Participants

Date

Dear Ms. (Participant),

During our telephone conversation, you expressed a desire to participate in my research study. My study is entitled UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL MEANINGS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE STRESS EXPERIENCES OF MANITOBA FARM WOMEN. This letter will recap the content of our telephone conversation thereby providing you with the opportunity to further reflect on whether you truly want to participate in this study.

As a farm woman, I am very interested in the issue of farm stress. For me, stress has always been a big part of the farming 'way of life'. You and I are not alone...farm women all over the world have been found to have high levels of stress. The purpose of the research is to understand the stress experiences specific to farm women. The farm 'way of life' may have something to do with the problem. As a farm woman, your expert knowledge may help me, and other health care providers to understand how culture needs to be taken into consideration when planning services to meet your needs. The research study has been approved by the Nursing Research Ethics Board, and the Regional Health Authority-Central Region. The study has been endorsed by the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line and supported by the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence.

As a participant in this study you will be expected to participate in two interviews that will last between 2-2 1/2 hours in December 2005 and January 2006. The interview can be held in your home or if you prefer at another location (ie. restaurant). If you incur transportation costs, I will cover the expense. Whatever works best for you. During the first interview, I will ask you some questions about how you experience stress. For example the first question asks about your life on the farm, how you manage to get your work done, and what motivates you to start your day. Between the first and second interviews, you will be expected to take photographs of events, settings, people, and experiences that best illustrate your stress experiences. A disposable camera, instructions, and a self addressed envelope will be left with you following the first interview. After you have completed taking the pictures, you will mail the film back to me so I can get the film developed. Photographs will be developed in duplicates. You may have a set of the photographs to keep. During the second interview, you will tell me stories about the images captured on film. Both interviews will be tape recorded. I will have two tape recorders just in case one of them breaks down. In total you may be looking at 5-6 hours of time required (interviews and taking photographs).

No harm will come to you as a result of your participation in this study. The immediate benefits of your participation may be that your experiences are legitimized. That means someone believes and understands what you are saying about your stress. Other benefits may be a long time in coming (influencing health policy, and planning). The information that you provide will be kept

confidential. That means that your name, address, or any information that could identify you will not appear on the questionnaire or interview material, presentations, or reports about the study, or in future publications. Certain photographs may be used in presentations, reports of the study, or in future publication should you give permission. However photographs will have identifying features changed so that they will be unrecognizable. The tapes, photographs and written notes from the interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for seven years and then they will be destroyed. The only people who will have access to the information from the tape-recorded interviews will be I, Dr. Roberta Woodgate, the Thesis Committee Chairperson, and the transcriptionist.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Prior to starting the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form. Your signature on this form means that you have agreed to participate in the two interviews. But you may change your mind at any time and that is okay. If you agree to participate, you do not have to answer all the questions if you do not want to. You are free to ask me to leave at any time during the interview. You are free to ask questions, and clarify information throughout the interviews. If, during the interviews, you are feeling uncomfortable, the tape recorder can be turned off and the interview stopped. With your permission, I will help you contact the staff at the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line, or a provider of your choice.

Should you be interested in a summary of the findings, a report will be mailed to you. You may also access the summary of findings at

Should you be interested in a summary of the findings, a report will be mailed to you. You may also access the summary of findings at www.ruralstress.ca at the end of the study (May, 2006). This web site is maintained by the staff at the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line.

You may contact the researcher and/or members of the thesis committee at:

Researcher	Thesis Chair	Internal Member	External Member
Simone Reinsch Graduate Student Faculty of Nursing University of MB. Winnipeg, MB. R3T 2N2	Dr. Roberta Woodgate Assistant Professor Faculty of Nursing University of MB Winnipeg, MB. R3T 2N2 (204) 474-8338	Dr. Pamela Hawranik Associate Dean Graduate Program Associate Professor University of MB. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2 474-9317	Dr. Shelley Buchan Chief Medical Officer RHA-Central Region Box 243 Building 36 Southport, MB. R0H 1N0 (204) 428-2018

Should you have any complaints, you may call Dr. Roberta Woodgate (as indicated above) or Margaret Bowman, the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122 or email at: margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca.

Unless, you inform me otherwise, our first interview will be held at your home January (), 2006 at _____. Following the first interview, a date will be set for the second interview. I look forward to meeting you.

Yours truly,

Simone Reinsch
Graduate Student
Faculty of Nursing
University of Manitoba

Appendix F

Consent Form

CONSENT WAS PLACED ON UNIVERSITY LETTERHEAD

Research Project Title:

UNDERSTANDING
THE CULTURAL MEANINGS AND PERCEPTIONS OF
SOUTHERN MANITOBA FARM WOMEN'S
STRESS EXPERIENCES

Researcher: Simone Reinsch RN, Graduate Student, Faculty of Nursing,
University of Manitoba

Sponsor: N/A .

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I. Why are you doing this research?

I became interested in the problem of farm stress because my husband and I used to own and operate a grain farm. As a farm woman, I am very interested in the issue of farm stress. For me, stress has always been a big part of the farming 'way of life'. Farm women all over the world have been found to have high levels of stress. The purpose of the research is to understand the stress experiences of Manitoba farm women. As a farm woman, you have expert knowledge of what it is like to live with stress. Your knowledge about stress is

important. The information you share will help you, me, and other health care providers to understand stress on the farm. The findings of the study may show you that stress is very common among farm women. More importantly, however, it may show that women who farm, may experience stress differently, and that these differences need to be taken into consideration when planning health services. The research has been endorsed (okayed) by the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line. It is supported by the Prairie Women's Centre for Health Excellence. As well, the study has been approved by the University of Manitoba, Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board and the Regional Health Authority-Central Region.

II. What do I have to do?

Eight to ten Southern Manitoba farm women are going to be interviewed twice. The farm women interviewed will not be acquainted with the researcher on a personal level. Your signature on this form means that you have agreed to participate in two interviews. During the first interview, you will be asked questions about stress (December, 2005). Between the first and second interviews, you will be expected to take photographs of events, settings, people, and experiences that best illustrate your stress experiences. A disposable camera, instructions, and a self addressed envelope will be left with you following the first interview. After you have completed taking the pictures, you will mail the film back to me so I can get the film developed. Photographs will be developed in duplicates. You may have a set of the photographs to keep. During the second interview, you will tell me stories about six photographs that best captures your

stress experience. Both interviews will be tape recorded. I will have two tape recorders just in case one of them malfunctions. During the second interview, you will tell me stories of stress based on six photographs you have taken and selected. The interviews will last 2-2 ½ hours in duration, in your home or at a mutually agreed upon site. The second interview will be held in January 2006. In total you may be looking at 5-6 hours of time required for the interviews and taking photographs

III. Will any harm come to me if I participate?

If you decide to participant in this research there will be no risk to you. You will not experience any harm that is greater than the harm you might experience in the normal conduct of your everyday life. Your participation is voluntary. I will ask you for permission to ask you the interview questions. If you say 'no', the interview will not take place. If you agree to participate you do not have to answer all the questions if you don't want to. You are also free to ask me to leave at any time during the interview. No harm is anticipated from participating in this study. Should you feel uncomfortable at any time; the tape recorder can be turned off and the interview stopped. If you like, I can assist you in contacting the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line, or any services of your choice. The benefits of participating in the study may be derived from having the chance to talk about your stress experiences, especially if you have not had the occasion to do so before.

IV. What equipment will be used?

The interviews will be tape-recorded. Two tape recorders will be on hand in case one breaks down. Disposable cameras will be provided to you to take pictures of images that best describe your stress experiences. Instructions on the use, and care of the camera will be provided.

V. Will people find out about how I feel?

All information gathered will be kept confidential. That means that your name, address, or any information that could identify you will not appear on the questionnaire, interview material, presentations, reports about the study, or in future publications. Certain photographs may be used, in presentations, reports of the study, or in future publication, should you give permission. However photographs depicting people in various activities will be changed. The tapes, photographs and written notes from the interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for seven years and then they will be destroyed. The only people who will have access to the information from the tape-recorded interviews, and forms will be I, Dr. Roberta Woodgate, the Thesis Committee Chairperson, and the transcriber. The transcriber will type out the taped recordings of the interview.

VI. How will I know the results of this study?

If you are interested in receiving a report of the findings you may sign below. You may also access a report of the findings at www.ruralstress.ca. This web site is maintained by the staff at the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line. The report will be in the form of a summary.

VII. Does it cost anything?

Transportation if any, long distance telephone calls, photo development, camera, postage costs will be paid by the researcher.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree that you will participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher, and involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice, or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Should you wish to contact the researcher and/or members of the thesis committee please call:

Researcher	Thesis Chair	Internal Member	External Member
Simone Reinsch Graduate Student Faculty of Nursing University of MB. Winnipeg, MB. R3T 2N2	Dr. Roberta Woodgate Assistant Professor Faculty of Nursing University of MB Winnipeg, MB. R3T 2N2 (204) 474-8338	Dr. Pamela Hawranik Associate Dean Graduate Program Associate Professor University of MB. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2 474-9317	DrShelley Buchan Chief Medical Officer RHA-Central Region Box 243 Building 36 Southport, MB. R0H 1N0 (204) 428-2018

This study has been approved by the University of Manitoba, Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. Should you have complaints, you may call Dr. Roberta Woodgate (as indicated above) or the **Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122** or email Margaret Bowman at: margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca . A copy of this consent has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

The findings of this study will be available once the study has been completed.

Would you like a summary of the results mailed to you: (*PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE*) **YES** **NO**

If yes, please include your mailing address:

Appendix G

Demographic Information

The information below will be kept confidential. Please answer all the questions. Should you have questions, please ask the investigator.

1. Year of birth _____
2. Where were you raised?
 On a farm _____ In a village _____ In a town _____ In a
 city _____
 How long have you lived on the farm: _____
3. Ethnic origin: (German, Dutch, French, Aboriginal) _____
4. Marital status:
 Married/Common Law _____ Living with partner _____ Single _____
 Widow _____ Separated _____ Divorced _____
5. Do you practice religion? Yes ___ No ___
 If yes, what is your religion? _____
6. Education (check highest level attended or completed)
 Elementary ___ High school ___ College/Trade School ___
 University _____
7. Do you work off the farm? Yes ___ No ___
 If yes, where do you work? _____
 How many hours do work on the farm per week? _____
 Reason for off the farm work? _____
8. Do you have children? Yes ___ No ___
 How many children still live at home?: _____

Age/ages of children_____

Other than your spouse/children does anyone else live with you?

Yes___No___

If yes, what is the relationship to you_____

9. What is the name of your Rural Municipality?_____

What is the distance from your farm to the nearest centre that you would call your town?_____

What is the ethnic origin of your farming neighbours:_____

10. What type of farm do you operate? _____

How many separate households are involved in the operation of your farm? _____households

11. Is the income derived from the farm sufficient to meet your needs?

Yes___ No___

Family needs? Yes___ NO___ Farm needs? Yes___ No___

12. Have you called the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line?

Yes___ No___

What services have you used? (*Please mark with a check mark*)

General Practitioner___ Psychiatrist ___ Nutritionist ___ Public Health

Nurse ___ Social Worker___ Addictions counsellor_____

Counsellor/therapist___ Home Economist___ Agricultural Rep.____

Religious Leader ___ Food bank___ Other_____

Is there anything else you think I need to know about you?

Appendix H

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your life on the farm.
 - Probe: What is a typical day for you on the farm?
 - During the winter?
 - During the spring?
 - During the summer?
 - During the fall?
 - Probe: What motivates you to start your day?
 - How would you describe your level of stress (low, moderate, or high)

2. Stress means different things to different people. What does it mean to you?
 - Probe: What are 'some tell tale' signs that let you know that you are feeling stressed?
 - Probe: Do you feel, think, or behave differently?
 - Probe: How does stress change how much you do in a day?
 - Probe: Effects on health? Short term and long term?

3. Certain things and events may cause stress for people. What kinds of things produce the feeling of being stressed for you?
 - Yesterday, last week, last month, and last year?
 - Are there things in the home/farm/community/government level that bring on stress?
 - Are there different stress experiences in relation to the farm/family/spousal issues?

4. Some women deal with stress in a variety of creative ways. What do you do to deal with stress?
 - Probe: When feeling stressed what do you do to make yourself feel better?
 - Probe: Religion, rural women's support groups, exercise, recreational activities
 - Probe: What health services and other services have you used if any? Were they helpful? (From demographic forms)

5. How do you think the farm 'way of life' affects your stress experience?
 - Probe: "That's just how things are done around here"

6. What kind of support would you like to see available to help farm women, such as yourself, to address stress on the farm?

Appendix I

Interview preamble—first interview

Hello! Thank you for allowing me the privilege of coming into your home. I would like to tell you a little bit about my study so that you can decide if you would like to take part in the interview today. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Manitoba. I am being supervised by Dr. Roberta Woodgate, a researcher at the University of Manitoba. I am interested in your stress experiences on the farm. I have some questions that will help us to talk about the stress in your life. I hope that my research may benefit you by allowing you the opportunity to talk about your experiences, but most importantly help people who are involved in making decisions understand the farm 'way of life'. Your experiences are important and it is important to get that information out to the public. Rest assured that the information you give will remain confidential and that all the information will be summarized in a report. No one will be able to recognize the information you have given to me today. Do you have any questions?

If you do not have any questions, I will ask you to read and sign the consent form. The interview will start after the consent form is signed at which time the audio recording will begin. If at any time you wish to stop the interview, or stop the audio taping, or would rather not answer a question please let me know.

Interview preamble—second interview

Hello! Thank you for allowing me the privilege of coming into your home again. This is the second interview of the study. I would like to tell you about the second phase of the study so you are certain you would like to participant. As you are aware you have been taking photographs of things that best describe your stress experience. During the interview today, you will pick six photographs to tell me about. Photographs will allow you to tell me stories about your experiences. Your stories are important and may tell me a lot about your stress experiences on the farm. Your photographs may be used in presentations and/or reports. You may keep all your photographs because I have a second set. Do you have any questions? If you do not have any questions, the audio tape will be started after you have selected your six photographs.

Appendix J

Photograph instruction sheet

The camera provided is a disposable Media single use camera with flash. It can take 27 pictures. You may take picture indoors or outdoors with it.

Instructions:

1. Turn flash switch to the 'ON' position
2. Stand 1-5 yards away from the object (inside pictures); hold camera steady, press shutter release. If you are taking pictures outside, stand at least 1 yard away from the object you wish to photograph.
3. Turn the flash switch off after taking a picture or when the camera is not in use.
4. Keep the camera dry at all times.
5. Return the camera promptly after having taken your photographs.

Photographs:

1. Take pictures of things, people, events, or situations that best represent your experiences with stress.
2. Take only 12 pictures even though the camera can take up to 27.
3. When you have completed taking the 12 photographs, please place the camera in the self-addressed envelope provided.
4. Upon receiving the camera, I will get the pictures developed in duplicate. When I return for the second interview, I will give you a set of photographs to keep. I will keep the other set.
5. Out of the 12 photos you have taken, you will select the 6 photos that best represents your experiences at the second interview.
6. During the second interview you will tell me stories about the pictures you have taken.
7. The pictures may be used in presentations, and reports. The pictures will be altered so the people in the photos and any other identifiers cannot be made out.

Appendix K

MFRSL Pamphlet



Stress?

We're just a phone call away.

1-866-367-3276
(FOR FARM)

Manitoba Farm Rural Stress Line



• **Web site** - Our interactive web site offers tips on how to manage stress, as well as links to other related sites. Check out our *What's New* page for notices on up-coming events and programs. www.ruralstress.ca

• **Speaker's Bureau** - The Manitoba Farm & Rural Stress Line can provide speakers who will talk to your group about rural stress and resiliency. Contact us at 571-4182.

• **Information Display** - We are also pleased to set up our Informational Display at community events and fairs. Call us at 571-4182.



Manitoba Farm Rural Stress Line



1-866-367-3276

www.ruralstress.ca

When you need someone to talk to... we're here. Confidential support, counselling and information for farm & rural families. We're just a phone call away.

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Appendix N

Field Notes

Excerpt

Participant 1
January 4, 2006

- Recruited: Purposive by MFRSL director
- First contact:

Participant telephoned and expressed a desire to participate in my study. The reason given was that she felt that culture plays a big part in how health services should be planned. She felt health determinants (socio-economic, culture) should be addressed.

- Follow-up phone call to set up a date.

She was very receptive to the invitation to participate. She volunteered to speak to the members of the B. F to recruit potential participants in my study. She lives in an area described as the Brandon Hills.

- Site:

Participant decided to be interviewed at a hotel in Brandon. The interview took place in a designated meeting room. Rationale that was given was that this was going to facilitate the process for me. She stated it would just be easier for her to come to me. As a consequence I was unable to assess the farm, farm home. The participant wants the second interview at a hotel or place of employment. I was greeted with open arms.

- Observations:

Refused reimbursement for transportation and telephone costs because she felt that she had gotten errands done at the same time, and she used her work telephone to call. She felt that this was going to be her contribution to the study.

- Participant attributes:

Warm, honest, with a neat sense of humour. Appeared happy, anxious, somewhat uptight. Perhaps nervous energy would best describe her. Casually dressed (jeans, and sweater). Attractive & well groomed with make-up. Well-educated, articulate, extensive vocabulary. Able to answer most questions except question 2 needed interpretation. Became reflective during the interview and by the end of the interview kind of contradicted what she had said earlier on in the interview. Did not remove her outerwear during the entire interview. She is from a fourth generation farming family. Left and returned to community following a twenty year absence. Wife old-timer-but also may be perceived as newcomer. Husband newcomer to community.

- Participant non-verbal communications:

Leaning forward, both arms on the table. Full of expressions-grimacing, laughing, sadness, keenness, compassion, anxious. Demonstrated a rainbow of expressions. Rubbing forehead, scratching back of neck. Became tearful when speaking of the felt emotional isolation in the community. Perceived isolation as a result of being viewed as different by other women-high paying job, higher education, language used, perceived better socio-economic status among community, sending her child out of community for school.

- Words requiring clarifications:

“Romantic memory”: remembered only the good things about growing up on the farm when making the decision to return to the farm. That is the realities of the lived experiences do not jive with her memories of growing up on the farm.

“Dying community”: a community whose old-timers are literally dying; farms being amalgamated into larger farms; rural depopulation-losing people; not enough people to volunteer (literally and symbolically).

Appendix O

Sketch Map of an Analyzed Domain

Host

- GENETICS

- INHERITED COPING

- ALCOHOLISM

“I think that [I am an adult child of an alcoholic] has molded my character] in how I raised my kids and how I think”

...[alcoholism] is something in my life that I've had to deal with my entire life because of my dad, my brothers, and relatives

- WORK ETHIC

- “I find projects to work on. I find, to time limited interesting sort on my style so sort of fast, furious and finished”

- “It's the way I was raised and my dad had a really strong work ethic and, it's what you do. And I undertook when I was coming back here”

- GENDER (roles)

- “...there is a gender issue there, there's no doubt about it, that women just respond at a different emotional level and I've really work hard on that”

- Traditional roles

- Non-traditional roles

- SELF as agent of stress

- “I can certainly cause my own problems, by too much analysis”

- “I probably let things bother me more than I should so I feel I create my own stress. I choose to let things bother me.”

- “I'm very private, I don't talk much even about the things that bother me”

- “I'm easily taken advantage of [by members of the community] not to feel a need to respond straight away”

- “I am emotionally isolated...now the women in the community would be offended to hear that and they would say well for heaven sakes you know like, call us we’ll go for coffee. It’s the level of interaction”
- AGE
 - The stage of life [peri-menopausal] sleep its not the same kind of sleep...makes me less able to deal with the stress than I, you know was before”
 - “..The reality is, we’re too old to be farming” because there is no time to recoup our losses.
- Education
 - “ And the problem is, is that I have had some amazing life experiences and have worked internally, and have created a very...I have developed very strong analytical skill so that I don’t look at anything, at a superficial level, and that has sever me very well in other communities and it’s a handicap here”
- Reactivity
 - Physical activity (variable among participants)
 - Nutrition (Overeating, overweight for some)

[Common patterns in hosts are demonstrated: the importance of working, gender and the self as contributing to stress]

Appendix P

Demographic Information

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Characteristic								
Age	46	45	48	49	39	47	64	42
Marital Status M-married	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Number of children (Age of children)	1 (6)	3 (15, 18, 21)	3 (16,23,25)	2 (18, 21)	5 (11, 13,14,16,17)	2 (24, 20)	4 (34, 36, 38,38)	2 (10, 13)
Religion U-United P-Presbyterian PR-Protestant	U	P	U	n/a	n/a	U	PR	n/a
Education U-University H.S-High School C-College Tr-Trade	U	C	H.S	H.S	H.S	U	H.S.	Tr
Ethnic Origin S-Scottish E-English Eu-European C-Canadian F-French	S	E	C	C	Fr	Eu	E	E
Off-farm employment FT-Full time PT-Part time	PT	PT	PT	n/a	FT	PT	n/a	FT
Type of work	Health	Health	Health	n/a	Student	Food industry	n/a	Health
Type of farm B-Beef M-Mixed (beef/grain)	B	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Distance to town Km-kilometres	16km	48km	16km	32km	64km	9.6km	4.8km	19.2km
Income sufficient Y-Yes N-No	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Services used to deal with stress AG-Agriculture H-Health	AG.	AG.	n/a	H	H	H/AG.	H/AG.	H

Appendix Q

Ethnographic Paradigm
 Substantiation of study findings in the literature

Taxonomies	Cultural Attributes	Supportive Literature
Self as invisible agent of the way-of-life (Represents the good farm woman who forsakes and subjugates her own needs to ensure the survival of the farm)	Personification of the farm as entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge
	Women's needs inferior to the farm, and the male farmer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing ▪ Farm yard aesthetics ▪ Spouse engaged in revenue generating work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge • Gerrard (2000)-farm as priority
	"You have to make sacrifices" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alteration of spending habits ▪ Hard work ▪ Lack of leisure time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerrard (2000): farm comes first • van de Vorst (2002) • Kubik & Moore, (2001); Roberts & Falk, (2004); Walker & Walker, (1987) • Rosenblatt & Anderson(1981); Walker & Walker, (1987)
	"Doing what needs to be done" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gendered division of labor ▪ Women's work invisible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerrard (2000b), McGee, (1983)
	Relinquishing control to male authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No decision making ▪ Lack of control ▪ Not given information/knowledge ▪ Daughter-in-laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge <p style="text-align: center;">Gerrard (2000b) Cont.</p>

Appendix Q (cont.)

Taxonomies	Cultural Attributes	Supportive Literature
Self as cognizant agent of changing times (Represents women as knowledgeable but powerless to deal with changing times at micro and macro levels)	Economic Forces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family Farm ▪ Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Knowledge • Gordon & Plain (1995); Kubik I Moore (2001); Walker Shubert & Walker, 1987) • No Canadian literature on BSE impact • New knowledge
	Social changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge
	Political forces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ineffective government policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meyer & Labao (2003); Gerrard, (2000); Kubik & Moore, (2001); Walker & Walker, (1987)
Self as subservient nurturing agent of the family (Represents the struggle to raise and educate children and be the family's caregiver)	Children needs supersedes women's needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Importance of parenting ▪ Effects of economics ▪ Discourage children to farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kubik & Moore, (2001), Roberts & Falk, (2004) • New Knowledge • New Knowledge
	Spouse's needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attachment to farm ▪ Spouse's stress vicarious experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge • New knowledge
Self as minder of women's inner voice (Represents women's endeavour to sustain equipoise of the self during changing times)	Women as emotional symptom bearer of the family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hopelessness ▪ Guilt ▪ Anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stein (1982) • Gerrard & Russell (1999) • Gerrard (2000)-internalize blame
	Women's ability to manage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking control ▪ Coming together ▪ Finding solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerrard (2000b)

Appendix R

Thesis Committee Members

Committee Chairperson

Dr. Roberta Woodgate
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba
Helen Glass Centre for Nursing
Winnipeg, MB.
R3T 2N2
(204) 474-8338
Email: Roberta_Woodgate@umanitoba.ca

Internal Committee Member

Dr. Pamela Hawranik
Associate Dean, Graduate Program
Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing
Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging
Helen Glass Centre for Nursing
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2N2
(204) 474-9317
Email: pam_hawranik@umantioba.ca

External Committee Member

Dr. Shelley Buchan
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Box 243
Building 36
Southport, MB.
R0H 1N0
(204) 428-2018
Email: sbuchan@gov.mb.ca