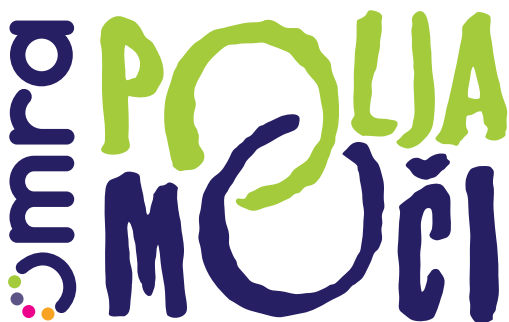


KMETOVATI IN DOBRO ŽIVETI: DELO, ODNOSI IN POLJA MOČI



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MOČI



KMETOVATI IN DOBRO ŽIVETI: DELO, ODNOSI IN POLJA MOČI

FARMING AND LIVING WELL:
WORK, RELATIONSHIPS, AND FIELDS
OF STRENGTH

Uredila: Nataša Dernovšček Hafner in Dino Manzoni



Založba ZRC

KMETOVATI IN DOBRO ŽIVETI: DELO, ODNOSI IN POLJA MOČI

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Recenzenta monografije: Mojca Zvezdana Dernovšek in Dan Podjed

Recenzentki in recenzenta prispevkov: Mojca Zvezdana Dernovšek, Dan Podjed,

Nataša Dernovšček Hafner, Dino Manzoni

Jezikovni pregled: Ana Glavina

Izdajatelj: ZRC SAZU, Družbenomedicinski inštitut

Zanju: Lilijana Šprah

Založila: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU

Zanjo: Oto Luthar

Glavni urednik založbe: Aleš Pogačnik

Avtor naslovnice: Danilo Lah

Avtorji fotografij: Nataša Dernovšček Hafner, Danilo Lah, Blaž Lenček, Boštjan Podlogar

Oblikovanje in prelom: Sara Munda

Tisk: Present, d. o. o.

Naklada: 300

Ljubljana, oktober 2026

Prva izdaja, prvi natis / Prva e-izdaja

Publikacija je v PDF-različici dostopna tudi na spletni strani:

<https://www.omra.si/poljamoci>



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<https://doi.org/10.3986/9789610511793>

Kataložna zapisa o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

Tiskana knjiga

COBISS.SI-ID 293022467

ISBN 978-961-05-1178-6

E-knjiga

COBISS.SI-ID 292896259

ISBN 978-961-05-1179-3 (PDF)

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Dino Manzoni in Nataša Dernovšček Hafner

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FARMING WOMEN AND THE RELATIONABILITY OF DROUGHT AND DISTRESS

Lia Bryant

ABSTRACT

Globally drought has become a recurrent disaster that threatens farm viability and is associated with loss of animal, plant and human life. The impact of drought and other economic, social and climatic disasters in Australia overwhelmingly focuses on men in farming and male farmer suicide thereby gendering mental health in farming. This contribution focuses on Australian farming women's sensorial experiences of drought. It draws on discussions held during a one-day participatory film making workshop with a small group of farm women in Southern Australia and the subsequent co-created film, Boots n' All. Film was chosen as the method as it enabled the capturing of the movements, sounds and sights of drought and its impact on women's daily lives. The women entitled the film 'Boots n' All', as it is a common saying in Australia that reflects working without stopping and pushing through. They also arrived at this title to draw attention to work boots on the farm as a material presence and reminder of the permeability of inside and outside as well as a constant reminder of work and family. The key dimensions of the film analysed in this contribution focus on women's descriptions of dirt on their bodies, windows and boots and accompanying emotions. Emotions associated with love, care, fear as well as experiences of endurance and sensations of exhaustion are attached to women's meanings of farming during drought. These feelings and sensations are deeply intertwined with caring for animals and soil and pose a threat to their current livelihood and financial futures, as well as their identities as farmers.

Key words: farming women, drought, distress, sensory, intra-actions

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https://doi.org/10.3986/9789610511793_05, CC BY-SA

1 INTRODUCTION

Across the globe climate disasters particularly floods and droughts have increasingly become part of the fabric of rural living (Freedman et al., 2025). Drought is a 'creeping phenomenon' and a slow recurrent violence with its impact continuing long after it has ended (AghaKouchak et al., 2021: 3). The anthropogenic conditions which create climate change impact on ground water quantity and quality destroying the quality of nutrients in soils and the lives of insects and birds, animals and humans. In Australia farmers in various parts of the country have experienced a series of droughts with the most enduring period being labelled the 'Big Dry' spanning the first decade of the millennium (e.g. 2000-2012). Subsequent droughts have occurred every few years and currently parts of Australia have been in drought since 2024. During drought the mental health of farmers is at risk through the burden of distress that comes with threatened farm viability and loss (Bryant and Garnham, 2017; 2015; 2014; 2013; Berry et al., 2010). These sustained periods of diminished rainfall have meant an eroding of the farm as a business, a lifestyle and a family concern.

As a drought occurs in place and as such is experienced differently, a universal definition of drought is not altogether helpful however, broadly drought is a 'water deficit...due to natural variabilities ...human decisions and activities... [including] climate change...[and] local water management' (AghaKouchak et al., 2021: 1). Despite periods of absence of rain, drought in most countries is defined by governments and as such is a political process. For example, in Australia drought is defined as historic low rainfall that is not a 'normal' part of climate variability over a period of at least three months in a specific region (Shi et al., 2020; Hanigan et al., 2018). Up until 2013 the Australian government had the authority to officially declare drought irrespective of the extent and period of diminished rainfall. The timing of this declaration was often contentious, lobbied for by farmers and debated by government and other stakeholders. Debates centred on whether and when the State should declare drought as a drought declaration required governments to provide farmers with packages for income relief (Bryant and George, 2016). In the most extreme circumstances drought declarations also led to the determination of guidelines for water

A brief introduction to the author

Lia Bryant is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Adelaide, and her research focuses on rural community wellbeing especially gender and rurality. She employs co-design and creative/arts-based methods in collaborative projects with rural communities. She has published widely and her latest book is *The Gendering of Hope: Rural and Farming Women's Biographies of Hope, Care and Resistance* (2025), Routledge.

restrictions in urban and rural areas (Bryant and George, 2016). However, since 2013 drought declarations have ceased and there has been a requirement for individual farmers to declare hardship due to drought in order to be assessed for economic and social assistance. Contemporary drought policy also requires farmers to adopt individual strategies to 'self manage' the conditions of drought on farms (Department of Agriculture, 2019). By no longer declaring a region in drought Australian policy has purposefully shifted focus from drought as an exceptional circumstance and a collective responsibility to drought as a recurrent condition and an individual problem.

Most of the research focusing on drought and distress in Australia has focused on men in farming and the subsequent 'crises of masculinities' that emerges as men experience threat to their identities and their farms leading to the possibility for suicide (Bryant, 2020; e.g. Kunde et al., 2017; Alston, 2012; Page and Fragar, 2002). By centring men in academic and government analysis of suicide, studies have overwhelming gendered suicide in farming (Bryant, 2020). Further, the collation of suicide statistics in farming arises from gendered assumptions about what counts as suicide and leaves unaccounted the higher rates of self-harm among rural women which occurs across global contexts (Saunders et al., 2025). Whilst there is complexity in obtaining data on self-harm especially due to social norms and stigma and a possible lack of reporting, there remains little quantitative or qualitative data across international contexts (Saunders et al., 2025). However, across the existing evidence in multiple geographical locations including Australia self-harm has been purported to increase for women with remoteness from city centres (Saunders et al., 2025; Harrison and Henley, 2014).

There has been a recent growth in scholarship particularly which reiterates the need for a focus on farm women's mental health. This body of work has explored farming women's depression and recovery (Fullagar and O'Brien, 2018), isolation and loneliness (Bryant et al., 2026; Wheeler et al., 2023), experiences of distress in relation to overwork (Becot et al., 2025; Bryant et al., 2024) and the anxieties associated with the physical risks to raising children on farms (Becot et al., 2025). However, few studies have explored how distress for farm women arises and is sustained in relation to climate crises (see Bryant, 2025; 2022).

This contribution focuses on farming women's experiences of distress in relation to drought. It draws on a participatory film making project with a small group of farming women from Southern Australia. The film and women's group discussions show how women experience distress in relation to their affective entanglements with naturecultures (Haraway, 2016; 2008) that is, the intertwining of nature and culture. Farming women's narratives and imagery demonstrate the significance of how the constellations of drought that is, wind,

dirt and heat (Bryant, 2022) stick to the body when working and permeate into the home creating distressing bodily sensations and emotions. For these women distress during drought is experienced as endurance and exhaustion through hard physical work and the continued care required to keep animals, crops, family and community alive. These contexts and conditions which shape daily living for women also challenge and reconfigure their identities as farmers.

2 MENTAL HEALTH AS DISTRESS AND DESPAIR

The gendering of farmer suicide and mental health occurs as pre-existing constructions of both gender and suicide shape how suicide is conceptualised (see Jaworski, 2016). Men and women take up meanings of suicide and of mental health based on discursive, performative and embodied practices that make up femininities and masculinities (Canetto and Cleary, 2012; Canetto and Lester, 1998). The consequences of gendering suicide and mental health in agriculture result in erasing farming women's experiences of distress. As Bryant (2020), drawing on Foucault's (1998) notion of "regimes of truth," argues that knowledge production on farmer suicide and mental health does not merely describe a social problem, but also shapes the policy frameworks through which the state defines mental health priorities and directs services toward particular groups within farming communities. However, women experience the same political and moral economy of farming. All farmers are subject to downturn in production, high input costs, unstable markets, climate change and environmental crises. The social and cultural context of farming including contingencies of belonging in rural communities and conflicts associated with succession and extended families are encountered by men and women. However, there is a sparsity of scholarship focused on women's experiences of these same conditions and their distress and practices of wellbeing. Moreover, whilst some stressors are shared across genders, people who identify as women experience distinct situated experiences of mental health due to rural and farming gendered socio-cultural norms. Thus, there are gendered experiences of mental health that need to be taken into account. For example, the formal and informal responses to mental health and service delivery options available to rural men and women differ and are structured according to gender. Men in farming in Australia for example, have access to peer support networks for mental health with similar frameworks not existing for women (Bryant et al., 2022). Rural and farming women report the need for women only services and supports (Bryant et al., 2026).

The sociology of mental health and feminist theories of mental health interrogate what mental health is and subsequently what understandings of mental health does in relation to attending to women's distress and wellbeing. Sociologies of mental health draw attention to the normalisation of mental health which inherently assumes an opposition to mental ill health (Bartlett, 2000). Thus, perceptions of what is 'normal', 'typical or acceptable 'mental health' remains unspecified...shrouded in assumption' (Bondi and Burman, 2001: 7). By coupling mental with health understandings of what is mental health become subject to pathologizing within 'psy' discourses that focus on individual personality and behaviour traits (Bryant and Garnham, 2013). Whilst the use of 'mental' within this commonly used terminology is dualistic locating 'mental health' within the cognitive, separating the mind and body (Williams, 2000: 561). Williams (2000: 561) argues that 'mental health' as a concept is subject to dualistic accounts of reason and emotion that place 'reason, madness, ... [and] mental disorder' as constantly acting/reacting with each other as presumed recognisable constants. Therefore, instrumental rationality views assume emotions as problematic, disruptive or unknowable deflecting away from the importance of emotions in 'mental health' (Williams, 2000). In relation to women, their bodies have been historicised as containers of uncontainable and essentialised emotions (Scott and Payne, 1984; Millett, 1972). Sociologists, however, have increasingly referred to ill mental health as a rising of distress and despair and as such deeply affective (Schnittker, 2025). As Schnittker (2025: 5) argues the 'deaths of despair' or in other words deaths due to despair have been explained due to experiences of job loss, poverty and a host of societal conditions that leave some people behind. However, affective politics in relation to societal conditions also shape self-worth. For example, working long hours is often discursively attributed to 'productivity' in farming with productivity portrayed as a moral value that engenders 'success' (Bryant, 2025). Such affective politics and ordinary ethics can work to reinforce or diminish self-worth and set the conditions that can give rise to despair (Knežević Hočevár, 2024; Bryant and Garnham, 2018).

Distress and despair are useful ways to understand 'mental ill health' in farming as distress decentres pathologizing discourses and considers the everyday complexities of the cultural, social and therefore emotional life unique to farming (Price and Evans, 2009). Distress opens an intellectual space of deliberate ambiguity to explore multiple and lived dimensions of emplaced bodies.

3 FARM WOMEN AND DISTRESS

Whilst there is no single category of 'farming women' and women experience distress differently according to place, custom, class, ethnicities and a host of other contextual details there are some recurring patterns of distress across geo-cultural contexts (Annes et al., 2021; Larder, 2021; Newsome, 2021). There is a long-established feminist scholarship in rural studies that shows in multiple geographical contexts that women's daily lives occur within gendered power relations that deeply shape autonomy and personal wellbeing (Sachs, 2016; Shortall, 2014; Bryant and Pini, 2011; Alston, 1995). While much of this literature does not explore distress per se it does show the contexts that create the conditions for the possibility for distress (there are exceptions e.g. Melberg, 2003; Carruth and Logan, 2002). Multiple studies have demonstrated that farm women are over worked and carry out labour across the domains of home, farm and off-farm work while remaining primarily responsible for child rearing and domestic labour (Shortall, 2001; 1999; Sachs, 1983). In relation to divorce, it is often farm women who leave the farming property and as Haugen and Brandth (2015) found women often receive a reduced financial settlement to allow their ex-husbands to keep the farm and enable succession to their children (Price and Evans, 2009; 2006). Women have also reported feelings of emotional distress upon leaving the property and being isolated or judged by their community (Bryant, 2025). Extended family dynamics, the subject position of daughter-in-law and tensions associated with farm succession act as gendered violence by controlling women's access to financial and other resources (Bryant, 2025). Further, women's bodies are surveilled in rural areas in relation to relationships, work, sexuality and procreation for farm succession (Bryant and Pini, 2011; Little, 2002). One critical way in which women's bodies are surveilled is through pastoral power (Foucault, 1998). Pastoral power is a male protective oversight of women which men determine what is in the best interests of women. In Australia pastoral power commonly occurs on Australian farms with younger farming women reporting that their husband's protective decision-making about what work they do and when, for example, use of farm machinery or being in inclement weather, shapes and limits spatial movements (Bryant, 2013). Thus, there is a gendering of space that occurs on the farm, within the house and the rural community that shapes gender relations and women's autonomy (Bryant, 2025; 2013).

There is a body of international knowledge developed since the 1980s which reports the threat to women's lives through intimate partner violence on farms (Little, 2020; 2017; Lanier and Maume, 2009). Collectively, these multiple

critical concerns of delimited autonomy, burden of multiple work roles, reduced access to finance and other resources and partner violence shape women's distress. Bryant (2020) argues that fear, violence, inequality and control need to be understood as forms of distress and trauma that are often excluded from conventional, medicalised understandings of farmer mental health.

Whilst there is a prodigious body of evidence that refers indirectly to farming women's distress it is only in recent years that there has been a growing literature in rural studies specifically focused on distress and farm women. Studies have focused on both rural and farming women's experiences of depression (Fullagar and O'Brien, 2018), stressors associated with farm safety risks as children are cared for and raised on farms (Becot et al., 2025), renewed research on how overwork across multiple paid and unpaid domains leads to stress (Hagen et al., 2026; Becot et al., 2025; Bryant et al., 2024; Scheyett et al., 2024) and experiences of anxiety associated with isolation and loneliness (Bryant et al., 2026; Scheyett et al., 2024; Wheeler et al., 2023). Contemporary research also explores farm and rural women's intersectional lives and their experiences of distress associated with social and cultural belonging in agricultural work, grassroots organisations and community groups (Hagen et al., 2026; Bryant, 2025; Conway and O'Mullane, 2025). Studies also explore gendered stereotypes in farming that inflict distress on women's identities as farmers and limit opportunities for inter-generational transfer and succession (Bryant, 2025; Shortall, 2014; Bryant and Pini, 2011).

Despite farming women living on and through the land, embroiled in soil, caring for animals and subject to weather and environmental crises there is little research within rural studies that explores women's distress in relation to their naturecultures. Alston (2024: 76) has argued gender is a key factor in how disasters are experienced and in times of drought:

When a disaster goes on and on as in the case of drought, there are new dynamics that shape gendered experiences. Farming families may be involved in heartbreaking and physically demanding tasks of feeding animals, destroying frail animals, carting water and coping with the devastation of watching the barren and eroding landscape die. A sense of stoicism demonstrated by men in the face of these events can have damaging effect on their mental health....As a result, men are more likely to be locked into the farm and become more isolated and depressed... while women are more likely to interact with their community, monitor the health of their family, ignore their own health and wellbeing and work off-farm to source the income to survive...

Research exploring rural disasters and farming women span the Global South and North and share some key lesson regarding gender and the increased vulnerability of women both during and post-disasters in relation to health and socio-economic wellbeing (Cocina-Díaz et al., 2025; Alston, 2021; Rushton et al., 2020; Enarson et al., 2018). Common to bodies of research is that women experience increased anxiety disorders due to climate events (Cocina-Díaz et al., 2025). However, even when anxiety post disaster is felt equally across genders it is experienced differently and subject to place and gender (Akerkar and Fordham, 2017). It is the nuanced and detailed narratives of gender and distress that occur in relation to climate crises that remain left untold.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A case study is used to explicate farming women's lived experiences of distress in relation to material entanglements during drought. Participatory filmmaking was employed as a method to emplace women's experience of distress within a temporally entangled moment in time and with human and more-than-human matter like, dirt, wind, hay, animals and objects including troughs, windows and windmills (Bryant, 2022). Film as a medium allowed place to come into being showing also women's bodies as becoming and entangled in space and place. Further, film as a method allowed for the capturing of the 'movements' (Pink, 2011: 4) of bodies, things and naturecultures, coming into being together (Haraway, 2008).

4.1 Case study: drought and distress

Farm women's narratives about drought and distress were explored during the process of codesigning a stop animation film (<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/nmc0cmoqtb7aagg45irs6/Boots-n-all-Final-Cut.mp4?rlkey=c08cc7jpzifm7ltR0oop5en0l&e=2&dl=0>). The three women who participated in the project self-identified to engage in a one day workshop to create a film on drought, distress and community (see Bryant, 2022 for further details about methodology and method). They responded to local flyers which were sent to women's farming groups in their area. The women share similar demographics as they all live on the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, near the same country town, were all in their 30s, married to men who had inherited or partly purchased the family farm, had primary school aged children and each co-farmed. One of the women also had part-time off-farm work. Each of the women were white from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds in line with the dominant agricultural cultural context of EP.

Eyre Peninsula (EP) is situated along the western coast of South Australia, spans approximately 170,500 sq km, is 600 km from the state's capital and holds approximately 3% of the state's population. EP is predominantly an agricultural region with mixed sheep/beef livestock and crop farming. The EP experienced prolonged drought from 2001-2010 and again during 2017-2018 when the film was created.

The research team consisting of the author and a communication designer facilitated the workshop and the groups engagement by using broad questions which explored everyday impacts to women's working life during drought, the financial, environmental, social and affective impacts of drought they and their community had experienced and their access to formal and informal support.

During the workshop three phases of participation and development of the film occurred (see Bryant, 2022 for detailed discussion). The first phase involved briefing about the research project and filmmaking process, ethics and consent, brainstorming ideas, discussing and reviewing ideas and identifying and agreeing on a key storyline. The second phase of the process involved creating a storyboard to sequence both the narrative and visual elements namely, photographs and drawings. The third phase involved the creation of materials like drawings and written headings, and the group discussed what material elements might be included (e.g. dirt). The women also decided to be filmed to share messages about drought and how communities can support each other. Following the workshop, the research team developed a draft mock-up of the film which was then sent to the group for feedback. Multiple iterations of feedback and development occurred before the visual aspects of the film were completed, the voice over provided by one of the participants and sound effects and music added to the near final copy. The completed film runs for 3 mins and 34 seconds.

Discussions among the women during the film making workshop were audio recorded. These conversations produced data which gave context to the decision-making processes in creation of the film and a context to why specific stories predominated in the final film (Bryant, 2022). Analysing the film and workshop discussions was an 'iterative process moving between within and across sources' (Bryant, 2022: 10). In short, data analysis involved an identification of the key sequences of events and accompanied visual images alongside relations between narratives, images and sounds (Rose and Tolia-Kelly, 2012). Thus, 'the analysis of data was a non-linear process that animates engagements and entanglements with narratives when formulating questions, engaging with participants and thinking, feeling and writing about women's stories' (Bryant, 2022: 10).

4.2 Permeabilities: embodying drought, dirt and distress

The title of the film *Boots 'n' All* has specific meaning in Australian culture as a cry to keep going, unsparingly (Bryant, 2022: 11). For the women who created the film the term 'boots and all' refers to working hard not holding back physically, emotionally and psychologically. Distress for women and men in farming is rarely explored in relation to bodies feeling, sensing, thinking with human and more-than-human matter during drought. The literature to date has explored ecological grief as a solastalgia felt as anticipated or actual ecological loss (Albrecht, 2020). However, how does distress manifest in the moment? Are there spatial contexts to where and how distress is experienced in women's bodies during times of drought?

Barad's (2003) concept of intra-action, that is, how bodies come into being in moments of time with multiple matter provides an analytical and methodological framework to explore farm women's material entanglements with both objects and naturecultures. For farm women naturecultures and objects are deeply tied to daily life on the farm and dominate how women experienced and expressed distress and drought (Bryant, 2022). In the film *Boots 'n' All*, the women chose two objects boots and windows and these are depicted early in the film to capture the permeability of spaces. Boots of all different sizes flung by the door were a constant reminder of work, farm and family. The title of the film *Boots 'n' All* suggests that outside spaces are always brought indoors in farmhouses and that farm work is deeply embodied – carried across thresholds (Figure 1). In these ways drought is inescapable.

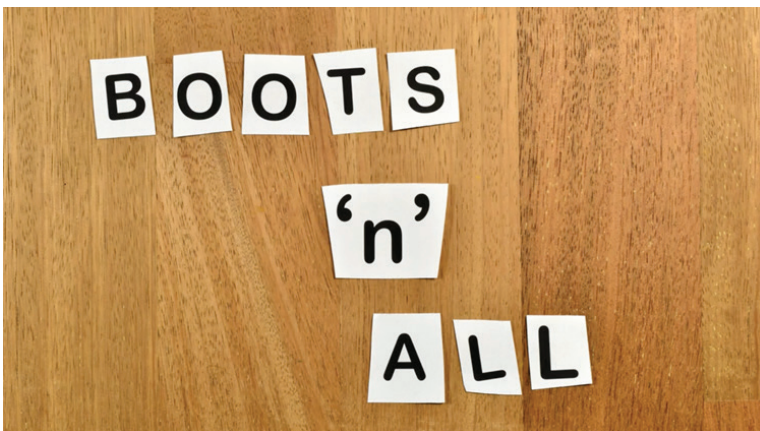


Figure 1: *Boots 'n' All* (Bryant, 2022: 11)

The constant flow of inside/outside spaces is caught on film by the window splatted with dirt. The window a constant presence often located above the

kitchen sink in these women's homes brings the outside in both visually and through sound. The wind shakes the panes while dirt hits like 'small rocks' (Bryant, 2022: 14). In the film women show before and after shots of drought as visible through the window (Figures 2 and 3). We are taken to green paddocks and then scorched earth with sheep in a barren landscape.



Figure 2: (Bryant, 2022: 12-13)



Figure 3: (Bryant, 2022: 12-13)

Boots bear the evidence of mud, soil, dust and the leather holds the shape of the wearer's foot but also the creases and cracks of daily wear that tell a story of labour occurring in all weather. A story of permeability and vulnerability between wearer and the boot as it acts as a protective casing and permeability between leather and constellations of drought, wind, dirt, rocks - the elements of drought that makes both objects and human and more-than-human beings

vulnerable. Through boots and windows objects become animated through how they interact with other things like the weather (Bennett, 2010; 2004; Barad, 2003) but also through the narratives human's attach to objects. As Bryant (2022: 11) argues 'Things are spun together, but they shift and vibrate - leather boots, soggy and unwearable, may provide a feeling of relief because of recent rain; soggy boots at harvest time may be frustrating, delaying reaping'. Distress manifests in the moment when women take their boots off, put them on and see them lined up near the door.

Women explained that 'the dry [also a reference to prolonged drought in Australia] is basically on my body'. These women felt drought marked their bodies externally with dirt as the heavy winds of drought blew precious topsoil across the property and it landed on things sticking to bodies and feed troughs. Women saw trees swaying in strong winds, windmills creaking and the sound of dirt hitting windows which caused sensations of distress.

Women reported that the sound of rocks hitting glass panes 'played on nerves', was anxiety provoking as it was a reminder of outside weather events. Researchers who focus on disasters argue that it is the physicality of dust in the throat or sounds of wind that increases anxiety and that these sensations stay with people long after the event. They become like an 'autobiographical memory' of drought as 'sensory information is an integral part of traumatic memories' (Knez et al., 2021: 1). Thus, wind, dirt and heat as elements of drought create an embodied affective politics (Duffy et al., 2016; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008; Ahmed, 2004) that are deeply connected and intra-act with climate change (Bryant, 2022). This is because what is felt, sensed, heard and seen illicit emotions (Duffy et al., 2016) and the sounds of drought brought forth by strong gusty winds or indeed when there is silence and stillness create bodily sensations. These bodily sensations are affectively entangled with meanings, experiences and practices of climate change. Duffy et al. (2016: 50) discussing embodiment and sound for example, argue that the 'feminist perspective of the visceral brings to the fore the corporeal and tackles sound as a material (rhythm, timbre, biological) and expressive (desire, affect, emotions and ideas) force.' Like the work of Duffy et al. (2016: 50), *Boots' n All* brings attention to the visceral which 'means...how we respond, react and interact with the movement of sound [sensations from sun and wind] across our body's (albeit permeable) boundaries.'

The dirt and dust which are significant during drought are brushed off bodies or attach to sweaty foreheads as women work on farm and emotions come to the surface. Emotions associated with love, care and fear are attached to meanings of farming for women. These meanings are intertwined with caring

for animals and soil and during drought pose a threat to their current livelihood and financial futures, as well as their identities as farmers.

4.2.1 Care, distress and exhaustion

Drought challenges the way women care for livestock. For example, women explained that 'you try to do everything you can for your animals' and that caring for sheep was 'a source of pride' (Bryant, 2022: 16). However, during drought 'it's the worry - the helplessness' and the long hours working to keep stock alive (Bryant, 2022: 17). Keeping sheep alive meant that hay need to be purchased and that was costly as well as difficult to source during times of drought. It also meant that as there was no groundcover for the sustenance of sheep and women spent long hours delivering hay bales by driving across properties that ranged in size from 2,000-12,000 acres. Delivering bales involved women lifting these off the backs of trucks and dumping them during the heat of the day before moving onto the next paddock on the farm and the next, repeating this process. One of the women explained that:

I found feeding sheep huge last year. Feeding hay out every day, constantly moving sheep to paddocks with feed in it; every two weeks transporting and selling stock, filling up feeders... [It] took up lots of time. Some days it was a whole day just checking and feeding sheep. (Bryant, 2022: 12).

Drought and distress sticks to women's bodies as exhaustion and the need for endurance, to push through exhaustion and to carry on to keeping animals and crops alive. Endurance has been theorised across feminist literature noting that it is not an individualised trait or form of individual resilience but is overwhelming collectively experienced among women in farming. It is a sustained condition of overwork, precarity and climate change and as the participant above suggests structural and gendered conditions of drought. Indeed, exhaustion is the corollary of endurance and is how endurance is felt in the body as heavy limbed despair.

4.2.2 Reconfiguring identities

The permeability of drought is a permeability between enduring and exhausted bodies, identities and landscape. In relation to identity, it is often men's farming identities that are explored in relation to threat of the loss of the farm and their mental health (e.g. Alston and Kent, 2008). There is a wide scoping literature that focuses on the identities of women who farm which explores women's roles or depictions as 'farm helper', 'farmer's wife' or 'invisible farmer' (Fink,

1992; Sachs, 1983) and changing farm identities in US; Europe and Australia to account for variegated and ongoing constitution and reconstitution of identities (Whitley and Brasier, 2020; Shortall, 2014; Burton and Wilson, 2006; Bryant, 1999). In Australia and elsewhere images in the media circulate of male farmers standing on scorched landscapes suffering from distress (Bryant, 2022; Ward, 2005). During participatory film-making women talked about the emotional pain of loss – loss of animals, crops, farm and identities.

Given the variegated changing nature of identities and the changing landscapes of drought, in these moments when distressed is felt women reported that their identities and self-worth are also being reconfigured. Identities are reconfigured to account for changing daily practices that is, as one woman said her thoughts about herself have shifted from ‘entrepreneur’ and ‘creative’ to ‘just trying to manage’. Farming as deeply precarious in drought is also aligned to a reconstitution of identities that are called into question with women asking the question ‘if I am not a farmer anymore, who am I?’ Loss in relation to climate change and wellbeing does not necessarily have to be loss that is permanent but can be temporal, place-based and partial. For example, it can be loss associated with ‘biodiversity...and species extinction as well as less visible, more intimate losses that, unexpectedly, materialise as an absence in people’s daily lives’ (Tschakert et al., 2017: 5). Thus, women may or may not experience clinical depression or anxiety as a result of climate crises like drought but do experience loss associated to place and of how they understand themselves and their presence in the world. During climate crises there can be an underscoring of what farming women consider valuable and important in their everyday lives – loss brings the value of landscapes, animals and identities into sharp focus (Bryant, 2022; Tschakert et al., 2017). Loss can undermine or threaten occupational identities in farming and some studies have referred to this threat as creating “transition pain” covered in fear, anger, despair and powerlessness (Kump et al., 2026: 2). This despair can lead to suicide as has been noted in studies of men in farming with there being minimal research which centre’s women and self-harm and suicide.

5 IN CONCLUSION

There has been a masculinisation in certain geographical context like Australia, UK, Canada and US of distress that is tied to the masculinisation of labour in farming. This masculinising of work and farmer as subject has eroded the visibility of women as physical farmers who labour in harsh conditions, who are responsible for finances, animals and crops and whose bodies during

drought also become distressed. The women who participated in making the film *Boots n' All* shared their stories of long working hours carried out in heat and heavy winds and the ways in which they had to keep pushing their bodies forward despite despair and exhaustion. They explained their fears provided the foundation for distress when feed was minimal for sheep and when the nutrients in top soil were blown away.

The film as a research method provided a glimpse into a moment in time and of women's bodies in motion in naturecultures – how sounds, sensations and sights affected their emotions. The film also made very clear that during drought distress is experienced constantly and the permeability of drought means that it enters through work boots, through windows into the home. The embodied nature of distress during drought for women is also a lived distress that is inescapable through the permeating of bodies with matter like dirt and wind, and the lack of separation between farm buildings and landscape. There is still much to know about women's experiences of distress and also their experiences of drought. The film provides a beginning only in bringing to attention women's lived accounts of distress and drought and raises further questions about distress and women's actions in drought especially in relation to caring for community. It also raises important questions about methods and in particular draws attention to the question: how can we continue to research farming women's distress that enables the multiple sensory aspects of distress to be captured?

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Foto: Blaž Lenček

KMETICE IN POVEZANOST MED SUŠO IN STISKO

slovenski prevod / Slovenian translation

Lia Bryant

POVZETEK

Suša postaja ponavljajoča se globalna katastrofa, ki ogroža preživetje kmetij, saj povzroča izgubo živali, rastlin in človeških življenj. Vpliv suše in drugih gospodarskih, družbenih in podnebnih katastrof v Avstraliji je pogosto osredotočen na moške v kmetijstvu in samomore kmetov, s čimer se duševno zdravje v kmetijstvu povezuje s spolom. To poglavje pa se osredotoča na čutne izkušnje avstralskih kmetic s sušo. Temelji na razpravah, ki so potekale med enodnevno participativno delavnico filmskega ustvarjanja z majhno skupino kmetic v Južni Avstraliji, in na naknadno skupaj ustvarjenem filmu Škornji in vse drugo (angl. Boots n' All). Film je bil izbran kot metoda, saj je omogočil zajemanje gibov, zvokov in prizorov suše in njenega vpliva na vsakdanje življenje žensk. Ženske so filmu dale naslov Škornji in vse drugo, saj je to v Avstraliji pogost izraz, ki odraža delo brez počitka in vztrajnost. Ta naslov so izbrale tudi zato, da bi opozorile na delovne škornje na kmetiji kot materialno prisotnost in opomnik na prepustnost notranjosti in zunanosti, hkrati pa je to nenehni opomnik na delo in družino. Ključne razsežnosti filma, analizirane v tem poglavju, se osredotočajo na ženske opise umazanih na njihovih telesih, oknih in škornjih in spremljajoča čustva. Čustva, povezana z ljubeznijo, skrbjo, strahom, pa tudi z doživljanjem vzdržljivosti in občutki izčrpanosti, so pripisana ženskam, ki osmišljajo kmetovanje med sušo. Ta čustva in občutki so globoko prepleteni s skrbjo za živali in zemljo in predstavljajo grožnjo njihovemu trenutnemu preživetju, finančni prihodnosti in identiteti kot kmetic.

Ključne besede: kmetice, suša, stiska, čutilen, intraakcije

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1 UVOD

Po vsem svetu podnebne nesreče, zlasti poplave in suše, postajajo vse bolj del vsakdanjega življenja na podeželju (Freedman in sod., 2025). Suša je »plazeči se pojav« (angl. *a creeping phenomenon*) in počasno ponavljajoče se nasilje, katerega vpliv traja še dolgo po njenem koncu (AghaKouchak in sod., 2021: 3). Antropogene okoliščine, ki povzročajo podnebne spremembe, vplivajo na količino in kakovost podtalnice in uničujejo kakovost hranil v tleh, življenje žuželk, ptic, živali in ljudi. V Avstraliji so kmetje v različnih delih države doživeli in doživljajo vrsto suš, najdaljše obdobje pa je bilo označeno kot velika suša, ki je trajala prvo desetletje tega tisočletja (na primer 2000–2012). Kasnejše suše so se pojavljale vsakih nekaj let, trenutno pa so nekateri deli Avstralije v suši že od leta 2024. Med sušo je duševno zdravje kmetov ogroženo zaradi bremena stiske, ki jo povzročata ogrožena sposobnost preživetja kmetije in njena izguba (Bryant in Garnham, 2017; 2015; 2014; 2013; Berry in sod., 2010). Ta dolgotrajna obdobja zmanjšanih padavin pomenijo erozijo kmetije kot posla, načina življenja in družine.

Ker se suša pojavlja na posameznih območjih in jo ljudje doživljajo različno, splošna opredelitev suše ni povsem koristna; na splošno pa je suša »pomanjkanje vode [...] zaradi naravnih nihanj [...] človeških odločitev in dejavnosti [vključno s] podnebnimi spremembami [in] lokalnim upravljanjem z vodami« (AghaKouchak in sod., 2021: 1). Kljub obdobjem brez dežja sušo v večini držav opredeljujejo vlade, zato gre za politični proces. V Avstraliji na primer sušo opredeljujejo kot zgodovinsko nizko količino padavin, ki ni »normalni« del podnebnih nihanj v obdobju vsaj treh mesecev v določeni regiji (Hanigan in sod., 2018; Shi in sod., 2020). Do leta 2013 je imela avstralska vlada pooblastilo, da uradno razglasi sušo ne glede na obseg in obdobje zmanjšanih padavin. Časovni okvir te razglasitve je bil pogosto sporen, zanj so lobirali kmetje, o njem pa so razpravljali vlada in druge zainteresirane strani. Razprave so se osredotočale na to, ali in kdaj naj država razglasi sušo, saj je razglasitev suše od vlad zahtevala, da kmetom zagotovijo pakete za pomoč pri dohodku (Bryant in George, 2016). V

Kratka predstavitev avtorice

Lia Bryant je profesorica sociologije na Univerzi v Adelajdi. Njeno raziskovanje se osredotoča na blaginjo podeželskih skupnosti, zlasti na vprašanja spola in podeželskosti. V sodelovanju s podeželskimi skupnostmi uporablja pristop sooblikovanja projektov in ustvarjalne in umetniške metode. Objavila je številne publikacije, njena najnovejša monografija, izdana leta 2025 pri založbi Routledge, pa nosi naslov Uspoljeno upanje: biografije upanja, skrbi in upora podeželank in kmetic (angl. *The Gendering of Hope: Rural and Farming Women's Biographies of Hope, Care and Resistance*).

najskrajnejših okoliščinah so razglasitve suše vodile tudi k določitvi smernic za omejitve porabe vode v mestnih in podeželskih območjih (Bryant in George, 2016), vendar so se od leta 2013 razglasitve suše prenehale, posamezni kmetje pa morajo zdaj sami prijaviti težave zaradi nje, da se jim lahko dodelita ekonomska in socialna pomoč. Sodobna politika na področju suše od kmetov zahteva tudi, da sprejmejo individualne strategije za »samoupravljanje« sušnih razmer na kmetijah (Department of Agriculture, 2019). Ker se regije ne razglašajo več za sušne regije, je avstralska politika namerno preusmerila poudarek s suše kot izjemnih okoliščin in kolektivne odgovornosti na sušo kot ponavljajoče se okoliščine in individualni problem.

Večina raziskav, ki obravnavajo sušo in stisko v Avstraliji, se je osredotočila na moške v kmetijstvu in na posledične »krize moškosti«, ki nastanejo, ko moški doživljajo ogroženost svoje identitete in kmetij, kar vodi v tveganje za samomor (Bryant, 2020: 614; npr. Kunde in sod., 2017; Alston, 2012; Page in Fragar, 2002). Z osredotočanjem na moške v akademskih in vladnih analizah samomora so študije v veliki meri izpostavile spolno razsežnost samomora v kmetijstvu (Bryant, 2020). Poleg tega zbiranje statističnih podatkov o samomorih v kmetijstvu izhaja iz spolno obarvanih predpostavk o tem, kaj se šteje za samomor, in ne upošteva višjih stopenj samopoškodovanja med ženskami na podeželju, ki se pojavljajo v globalnih kontekstih (Saunders in sod., 2025). Pridobivanje podatkov o samopoškodovanju je zapleteno, zlasti zaradi družbenih norm, stigme in morebitnega pomanjkanja poročanja, zato je v mednarodnih kontekstih malo kvantitativnih ali kvalitativnih podatkov (Saunders in sod., 2025). Kljub temu obstoječi dokazi iz različnih geografskih območij, vključno z Avstralijo, kažejo, da se samopoškodovanje pri ženskah povečuje z oddaljenostjo od mestnih središč (Saunders in sod., 2025; Harrison in Henley, 2014).

V zadnjem času se je povečalo število raziskav, ki ponovno poudarjajo potrebo po osredotočenosti na duševno zdravje kmetic. Te raziskave so obravnavale depresijo in okrevanje kmetic (Fullagar in O'Brien, 2018), izoliranost in osamljenost (Bryant in sod., 2026; Wheeler in sod., 2023), doživljanje stisk, povezanih s preobremenjenostjo (Becot in sod., 2025; Bryant in sod., 2024), in tesnobo, povezano s fizičnimi tveganji pri vzgoji otrok na kmetijah (Becot in sod., 2025). Kljub temu je le malo študij raziskovalo, kako stiska kmetic nastane in se ohranja v povezavi s podnebnimi krizami (gl. Bryant, 2025 in 2022).

To poglavje se osredotoča na izkušnje kmetic z duševno stisko v povezavi s sušo. Temelji na participativnem filmskem projektu, v katerem je sodelovala majhna skupina kmetic iz Južne Avstralije. Film in skupinske razprave prikazujejo, kako ženske doživljajo stisko zaradi svojih čustvenih prepletenosti z naravokulturami (Haraway, 2016 in 2008), torej s prepletanjem narave in kulture. Pripovedi in

podobe kmetic kažejo, kako pomembno je, da se konstelacije suše, kot so veter, prah in vročina (Bryant, 2022), pri delu prilepijo na telo in prodrejo v dom, kar ustvarja mučne telesne občutke in čustva. Te ženske doživljajo stisko med sušo kot vzdržljivost in izčrpanost zaradi težkega fizičnega dela in nenehne skrbi za ohranjanje živali, pridelkov, družine in skupnosti pri življenju. Ti konteksti in okoliščine, ki oblikujejo vsakdanje življenje žensk, hkrati izzivajo in preoblikujejo njihovo identiteto kot kmetic.

2 DUŠEVNO ZDRAVJE KOT STISKA IN OBUP

Uspoljevanje kmečkega samomora in duševnega zdravja se pojavlja, ker že obstoječe konstrukcije spola in samomora vplivajo na to, kako je samomor konceptualiziran (gl. Jaworski, 2016). Moški in ženske sprejemajo pomene samomora in duševnega zdravja na podlagi diskurzivnih, performativnih in utelešenih praks, ki oblikujejo ženskost in moškost (Canetto in Cleary, 2012; Canetto in Lester, 1998). Posledice uspoljevanja samomora in duševnega zdravja v kmetijstvu vodijo v izbris doživljanja stisk kmetic. Kot trdi Bryant (2020: 1), »je ustvarjanje znanja o kmečkih samomorih [in duševnem zdravju] imelo globok vpliv na 'režime resnice' (Foucault, 1998), [...] ki oblikujejo državni aparat, ki piše politiko duševnega zdravja, in usmerjanje storitev k določenim populacijam v kmetijskih skupnostih«. Vendar ženske doživljajo isto politično in moralno ekonomijo kmetijstva. Tako kmetje kot kmetice so izpostavljeni upadu proizvodnje, visokim stroškom vložkov, nestabilnim trgom, podnebnim spremembam in okoljskim krizam. Ženske in moški se srečujejo z družbenim in kulturnim kontekstom kmetovanja, vključno z nepredvidljivostmi pripadnosti podeželskim skupnostim in konflikti, povezanimi z nasledstvom in razširjenimi družinami. Kljub temu je malo raziskav, ki se osredotočajo na izkušnje žensk v teh razmerah, na njihovo stisko in prakse za doseganje dobrega počutja. Poleg tega, čeprav so nekateri stresni dejavniki skupni obema spoloma, imajo ljudje, ki se identificirajo kot ženske, zaradi podeželskih in kmetijskih družbeno-kulturnih norm, povezanih s spolom, drugačne izkušnje z duševnim zdravjem, zato obstajajo uspoljene izkušnje z duševnim zdravjem, ki jih je treba upoštevati. Uradni in neuradni odzivi na duševno zdravje in možnosti zagotavljanja storitev, ki so na voljo podeželskim moškim in ženskam, se razlikujejo in so strukturirani glede na spol. Moški, ki se ukvarjajo s kmetijstvom v Avstraliji, imajo dostop do mrež medsebojne podpore za duševno zdravje, medtem ko za ženske podobni okviri ne obstajajo (Bryant in sod., 2022). Ženske na podeželju in v kmetijstvu poročajo o potrebi po storitvah in podpori, namenjenih izključno ženskam (Bryant in sod., 2026).

Sociologija duševnega zdravja in feministične teorije duševnega zdravja raziskujejo, kaj je duševno zdravje in kaj razumevanje duševnega zdravja naredi pri obravnavanju stiske in dobrega počutja žensk. Sociologije duševnega zdravja opozarjajo na normalizacijo duševnega zdravja, ki po svoji naravi predpostavlja nasprotje duševni bolezni (Bartlett, 2000), zato ostajajo predstave o tem, kaj je »'normalno', 'tipično' ali 'sprejemljivo duševno zdravje', nedoločene [...] zavite v domneve« (Bondi in Burman, 2001: 7). S povezovanjem duševnega z zdravjem postane razumevanje tega, kaj je duševno zdravje, predmet patologizacije znotraj »psi[holoških in psihiatričnih]« diskurzov, ki se osredotočajo na individualne osebnostne in vedenjske lastnosti (Bryant in Garnham, 2013). Uporaba »duševnega« v tej pogosto uporabljeni terminologiji je dualistična, saj umešča »duševno zdravje« v kognitivno sfero in ločuje um od telesa (Williams, 2000: 561). Williams (2000: 561) trdi, da je »duševno zdravje« kot koncept predmet dualističnih razlag razuma in čustev, ki »razum, norost [in] duševno motnjo« postavljajo v stalno medsebojno delovanje ali odzivanje kot domnevno prepoznavne konstante. Instrumentalno-racionalistični pogledi zato obravnavajo čustva kot problematična, moteča ali nepoznana, s čimer se odmikajo od pomena čustev v »duševnem zdravju« (Williams, 2000). Ženska telesa so bila v zgodovini obravnavana kot posode za nebrzdana in esencializirana čustva (Scott in Payne, 1984; Millett, 1972). Sociologi pa vse pogostejše opredeljujejo slabo duševno zdravje kot naraščanje stiske in obupa in kot nekaj globoko afektivnega (Schnittker, 2025). Kot trdi Schnittker (2025: 5), so »smrti iz obupa« oziroma smrti zaradi obupa pojasnjene z izkušnjami izgube zaposlitve, revščine in različnimi družbenimi razmerami, ki nekatere ljudi puščajo za sabo. Afektivna politika v povezavi z družbenimi razmerami oblikuje tudi samospoštovanje. Dolge delovne ure v kmetijstvu se na primer pogosto diskurzivno pripisujejo »produktivnosti«, pri čemer se produktivnost prikazuje kot moralna vrednota, ki ustvarja »uspeh« (Bryant, 2025). Takšna afektivna politika in vsakdanja etika lahko okrepi ali zmanjšata samospoštovanje in ustvarita okoliščine, ki lahko povzročijo obup (Knežević Hočevar, 2024; Bryant in Garnham, 2018).

Stiska in obup sta koristna načina za razumevanje »duševnih težav« v kmetijstvu, saj stiska razsredišča patologizirajoče diskurze in upošteva vsakodnevne zapletenosti kulturnega, družbenega in čustvenega življenja, ki so edinstvene za kmetovanje (Price in Evans, 2009). Stiska odpira intelektualni prostor namerne dvoumnosti, ki omogoča raziskovanje raznolikih in živeti razsežnosti teles, vpetih v določeno okolje.

3 KMETICE IN STISKA

Čeprav ne obstaja enotna kategorija kmetic in ženske stiske doživljajo različno glede na kraj, običaje, družbeni razred, etnično pripadnost in druge kontekstualne podrobnosti, se v različnih geokulturnih okoljih pojavljajo nekateri ponavljajoči se vzorci stiske (Annes in sod., 2021; Larder, 2021; Newsome, 2021). V raziskavah podeželja obstaja dolgo uveljavljena feministična znanstvena usmeritev, ki v različnih geografskih kontekstih kaže, da se vsakdanje življenje žensk odvija v okviru spolno zaznamovanih odnosov moči, ki globoko vplivajo na avtonomijo in osebno dobrobit (Sachs, 2016; Shortall, 2014; Bryant in Pini, 2011; Alston, 1995). Čeprav večina te literature ne raziskuje stiske neposredno, prikazuje kontekste, ki ustvarjajo pogoje za njen možni nastanek (obstajajo izjeme, kot so Melberg, 2003; Carruth in Logan, 2002). Več raziskav je pokazalo, da so kmetice preobremenjene z delom, saj opravljajo delo doma, na kmetiji in zunaj nje, hkrati pa ostajajo v prvi vrsti odgovorne za vzgojo otrok in gospodinjstva opravila (Shortall, 2001 in 1999; Sachs, 1983). V primeru razveze so pogosto kmetice tiste, ki zapustijo kmetijsko posestvo, in kot sta ugotovili Haugen in Brandth (2015), ženske pogosto prejmejo zmanjšano denarno poravnavo, da lahko njihovi nekdanji možje obdržijo kmetijo in omogočijo nasledstvo otrokom (Price in Evans, 2009 in 2006). Ženske poročajo tudi o čustveni stiski ob odhodu s kmetije in o osamljenosti ali obsodbah skupnosti (Bryant, 2025). Dinamika širše družine, položaj snahe in napetosti, povezane z nasledstvom na kmetiji, delujejo kot uspoljeno nasilje, saj omejujejo dostop žensk do denarnih in drugih virov (Bryant, 2025). Poleg tega se na podeželju nadzorujejo ženska telesa v zvezi z odnosi, delom, spolnostjo in rojevanjem otrok za nasledstvo kmetije (Bryant in Pini, 2011; Little, 2002). Eden ključnih načinov nadzora ženskih teles je pastoralna oblast (Foucault, 1998). Pastoralna moč pomeni moški zaščitniški nadzor nad ženskami, pri katerem moški določajo, kaj je v najboljšem interesu žensk. V Avstraliji se pastoralna moč pogosto pojavlja na kmetijah, kjer mlajše kmetice poročajo, da zaščitniške odločitve njihovih mož o tem, kakšno delo opravljajo in kdaj, na primer uporaba kmetijskih strojev ali delo zunaj v neugodnih vremenskih razmerah, oblikujejo in omejujejo njihovo gibanje v prostoru (Bryant, 2013). Tako na kmetiji, v hiši in podeželski skupnosti prihaja do uspoljenega razmejevanja prostora, ki oblikuje odnose med spoloma in avtonomijo žensk (Bryant, 2025 in 2013).

Od 80. let prejšnjega stoletja se je razvila obsežna mednarodna strokovna literatura, ki opozarja na nevarnost za življenje žensk zaradi nasilja v intimnih partnerskih odnosih na kmetijah (Little, 2020 in 2017; Lanier in Maume, 2009). Številne kritične zaskrbljenosti, kot so omejena avtonomija, breme več delovnih

vlog, omejen dostop do denarja in drugih virov in nasilje partnerja, skupaj oblikujejo stisko žensk. Po mnenju Bryant (2020: 621) »se strah, nasilje, neenakost in nadzor doživljajo kot stiska, v nekaterih primerih pa kot travma, in ostajajo odsotni v konceptualizacijah kmečkega duševnega zdravja, ki temeljijo na tradicionalnih medicinskih pojmovanjih 'duševne' bolezni«.

Čeprav obstaja obsežen nabor dokazov, ki posredno kažejo na stisko kmetic, se je šele v zadnjih letih v raziskavah o podeželju pojavila vse večja količina literature, ki se posebej osredotoča na to problematiko. Raziskave so obravnavale tako podeželanke kot kmetice z izkušnjo depresije (Fullagar in O'Brien, 2018), stresne dejavnike, povezane z varnostnimi tveganji na kmetijah, kjer se otroci negujejo in vzgajajo (Becot in sod., 2025), in nove ugotovitve o tem, kako prekomerno delo na več plačanih in neplačanih področjih vodi do stresa (Hagen in sod., 2026; Becot in sod., 2025; Bryant in sod., 2024; Scheyett in sod., 2024). Prav tako so raziskovali izkušnje z anksioznostjo, povezano z izolacijo in osamljenostjo (Bryant in sod., 2026; Scheyett in sod., 2024; Wheeler in Lobley, 2023). Sodobne raziskave se posvečajo tudi intersekcionalnim življenjem kmetic in podeželank in njihovemu doživljanju stiske, povezane z družbeno in kulturno pripadnostjo v kmetijskem delu, lokalnih organizacijah in skupnostnih skupinah (Hagen in sod., 2026; Bryant, 2025; Conway in O'Mullane, 2025). Raziskave preučujejo tudi uspoljene stereotipe v kmetijstvu, ki povzročajo stisko pri identiteti žensk kot kmetic in omejujejo možnosti za medgeneracijski prenos in nasledstvo (Bryant, 2025; Bryant in Pini, 2011; Shortall, 2014).

Čeprav kmetice živijo na zemlji in od nje, so tesno povezane s prstjo, skrbjo za živino in so izpostavljene vremenskim in okoljskim krizam, v raziskavah o podeželju obstaja malo študij, ki bi raziskovale stisko žensk v povezavi z njihovimi naravokulturami. Alston (2024: 76) trdi, da je spol ključni dejavnik pri doživljanju nesreč, zlasti v času suše:

Ko se nesreča vleče, kot v primeru suše, se pojavijo nove dinamike, ki oblikujejo izkušnje, povezane s spolom. Kmečke družine so lahko vpletene v srce parajoče in telesno zahtevne naloge, kot so hranjenje živali, usmrnitev šibkih živali, prevažanje vode in spopadanje z uničenjem, ko opazujejo, kako umira neplodna in erodirana pokrajina. Stoicizem, ki ga moški kažejo ob teh dogodkih, lahko škodljivo vpliva na njihovo duševno zdravje. [...] Posledica tega je, da so moški bolj verjetno zaprti na kmetiji in postanejo bolj osamljeni in depresivni, [...] medtem ko so ženske pogostejše v stiku s skupnostjo, skrbijo za zdravje družine, zanemarjajo lastno zdravje in dobro počutje in delajo zunaj kmetije, da bi pridobile dohodek za preživetje.

Raziskave, ki obravnavajo naravne nesreče na podeželju in kmetice, zajemajo tako globalni jug kot sever in ponujajo ključna spoznanja glede spola in povečane ranljivosti žensk med nesrečami in po njih v zvezi z zdravjem in družbeno-ekonomskim blagostanjem (Cocina-Díaz in sod., 2025; Alston, 2021; Rushton in sod., 2020; Enarson in sod., 2018). Skupna značilnost teh raziskav je, da ženske zaradi podnebnih dogodkov pogosteje doživljajo anksiozne motnje (Cocina-Díaz in sod., 2025). Tesnoba po nesreči, tudi če jo občutita oba spola, se doživlja različno in je odvisna od kraja in spola (Akerkar in Fordham, 2017). Neizpovedane ostajajo podrobne pripovedi v zvezi s spolom in stisko, ki se pojavljajo v povezavi s podnebnimi krizami.

4 ZASNOVA RAZISKAVE

Izkušnje stiske kmetic v povezavi z materialnimi prepletenostmi med sušo razlagamo na podlagi študije primera. Kot metodo smo uporabili participativno filmsko ustvarjanje, da bi izkušnjo stiske žensk umestili v časovno prepleten trenutek in v povezavo s človeško in več-kot-človeško snovjo, kot so zemlja, veter, seno, živali in predmeti, vključno s koriti, okni in vetrnicami (Bryant, 2022). Film kot medij je omogočil kraj nastajanja, ki prikazuje tudi ženska telesa kot nastajajoča in vpletena v prostor in kraj. Poleg tega je film kot metoda omogočil zajemanje »gibanj« (Pink, 2011: 4) teles, stvari in naravokultur, ki nastajajo skupaj (Haraway, 2008).

4.1 Študija primera: suša in stiska

Pripovedi kmetic o suši in stiski so bile raziskane v procesu skupnega sooblikovanja filma, posnetega v tehniki stop-motion (<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/nmc0cmogtbt7agg45irs6/Boots-n-all-Final-Cut.mp4?rlkey=c08cc7jpzifm71tr0oop5en0l&e=2&dl=0>). Tri ženske, ki so sodelovale v projektu, so se prijavile na enodnevno delavnico za snemanje filma o suši, stiski in skupnosti (za podrobnejše informacije o metodologiji in metodi gl. Bryant, 2022). Odzvale so se na lokalne letake, ki so bili razposlani kmečkim skupinam žensk v njihovi okolici. Ženske imajo podobne demografske značilnosti, saj vse živijo na polotoku Eyre v Južni Avstraliji, v bližini istega podeželskega mesta, so v 30. letih, poročene z moškimi, ki so podedovali ali delno kupili družinsko kmetijo, imajo šoloobvezne otroke in vsaka od njih sokmetuje. Ena od žensk je imela tudi delo zunaj kmetije za polovični delovni čas. Vse ženske so bile bele in anglo-keltskega porekla, kar je v skladu s prevladujočim kmečkim kulturnim kontekstom polotoka Eyre.

Polotok Eyre (PE) leži ob zahodni obali Južne Avstralije, obsega približno 170.500 km², je oddaljen 600 km od prestolnice zvezne države in na njem živi približno tri odstotke prebivalstva te zvezne države. PE je pretežno kmetijska regija, kjer se ukvarjajo z mešano ovčjo ali govedorejsko živinorejo in poljedelstvom. PE je doživel dolgotrajno sušo v letih 2001–2010 in ponovno v letih 2017–2018, ko je bil posnet film.

Raziskovalno skupino sta sestavljali avtorica in oblikovalka komunikacije. Delavnico sta vodili in spodbujali skupine k sodelovanju z uporabo splošnih vprašanj, ki so razkrivala vsakodnevne posledice suše na delovno življenje žensk, denarne, okoljske, družbene in čustvene posledice suše, ki so jih doživele same in njihova skupnost, prav tako sta preučevali njihov dostop do uradne in neuradne podpore.

Med delavnico so potekale tri faze sodelovanja in razvoja filma (za podrobnejšo obravnavo gl. Bryant, 2022). Prva faza je vključevala predstavitev raziskovalnega projekta in procesa snemanja filma, etičnih vidikov in pridobivanja soglasja, zbiranje idej, razpravo, pregled idej, opredelitev in dogovor o ključni zgodbi. Druga faza je obsegala izdelavo snemalne knjige za razporeditev pripovednih in vizualnih elementov, kot so fotografije in risbe. Tretja faza je zajemala izdelavo materialov, kot so risbe in pisni naslovi, skupina pa je razpravljala, katere materialne elemente bi lahko vključili (na primer umazanijo). Ženske so se tudi odločile, da se posname, kako delijo sporočila o suši in kako se lahko skupnosti medsebojno podpirajo. Po delavnici je raziskovalna ekipa razvila osnutek filma, ki je bil nato poslan skupini za povratne informacije. Pred dokončanjem vizualnih vidikov filma je potekalo več ponovitev povratnih informacij in razvoja, glas v ozadju je zagotovila ena od udeleženk, zvočni učinki in glasba pa so bili dodani skoraj končni različici. Končani film traja tri minute in 34 sekund.

Pogovori med ženskami med delavnico snemanja filma so bili avdio posneti. Ti pogovori so zagotovili podatke, ki so dali kontekst procesom odločanja pri ustvarjanju filma in razlogom, zakaj so v končnem filmu prevladovale določene zgodbe (Bryant, 2022). Analiza filma in pogovorov na delavnici je bila »iterativni proces, ki se je gibal v virih, med njimi in preko njih« (Bryant, 2022: 10). Skratka, analiza podatkov je vključevala identifikacijo ključnih zaporedij dogodkov, spremljajočih vizualnih podob in odnosov med pripovedmi, podobami in zvoki (Rose in Tolia-Kelly, 2012). Tako je bila »analiza podatkov nelinearen proces, ki oživlja vpletenost in prepletenost s pripovedmi pri oblikovanju vprašanj, sodelovanju z udeleženkami in razmišljanju, čutenju in pisanju o zgodbah žensk« (Bryant, 2022: 10).

4.2 Prepustnosti: utelešenje suše, umazanija in stiska

Naslov filma *Škornji in vse drugo* (angl. *Boots 'n' All*) ima v avstralski kulturi poseben pomen kot poziv k neomajnemu vztrajanju (Bryant, 2022: 11). Za ženske, ki so ustvarile film, izraz »škornji in vse drugo« pomeni trdo delo brez zadržkov – telesnih, čustvenih in psiholoških. Stiska žensk in moških v kmetijstvu se redko raziskuje v povezavi s telesom, ki čuti, zaznava in razmišlja s človeško in več-kot-človeško snovjo med sušo. Dosedanja literatura je raziskovala ekološko žalost kot solastalgijo, ki se občuti kot pričakovana ali dejanska ekološka izguba (Albrecht, 2020). Vendar kako se stiska kaže v trenutku? Ali obstajajo prostorski konteksti, kjer in kako se stiska doživlja v ženskih telesih v času suše?

Koncept intraakcije Karen Barad (2003), tj. kako telesa nastajajo v trenutkih, ko se prepletajo različne snovi, ponuja analitični in metodološki okvir za raziskovanje materialnih prepletenosti kmetic tako s predmeti kot z naravokulturami. Za kmetice so naravokulture in predmeti globoko povezani z vsakdanjim življenjem na kmetiji in prevladujejo v tem, kako so ženske doživljale in izražale stisko in sušo (Bryant, 2022). V filmu *Škornji in vse drugo* so ženske izbrale dva predmeta – škornje in okna –, ki sta prikazana že na začetku filma, da bi se zajela prepustnost prostorov. Škornji vseh velikosti, odvrženi ob vratih, so bili nenehen opomnik na delo, kmetijo in družino. Naslov filma *Škornji in vse drugo* nakazuje, da se zunanji prostori v kmečkih hišah vedno prenašajo v notranjost in da je kmečko delo globoko utelešeno – prenaša se prek pragov (slika 1). Na ta način se suši ni mogoče izogniti.



Slika 1: Škornji in vse drugo (angl. *Boots 'n' All*) (Bryant, 2022: 11)

Neprekinjeni pretok med notranjimi in zunanjimi prostori je ujet v film skozi okno, prekrito z umazanijo. Okno, ki je stalna prisotnost in se v domovih teh žensk pogosto nahaja nad kuhinjskim pomivalnim koritom, prinaša zunanji

svet v notranjost tako vizualno kot tudi z zvokom. Veter trese stekla, medtem ko umazanija udarja kot »majhni kamni« (Bryant, 2022: 14). V filmu ženske prikazujejo posnetke pred sušo in po njej, kot so vidni skozi okno (sliki 2 in 3). Popeljejo nas na zelene pašnike in nato na ožgano zemljo z ovci v pusti pokrajini.



Slika 2: (Bryant, 2022: 12–13)



Slika 3: (Bryant, 2022: 12–13)

Škornji nosijo sledi blata, zemlje in prahu, usnje pa ohranja obliko stopala nosilke, gube in razpoke, ki nastanejo pri vsakdanji rabi in pripovedujejo zgodbo o delu v vseh vremenskih razmerah; zgodbo o prepustnosti in ranljivosti med nosilko in škornjem, ki deluje kot zaščitna ovojnica, in o prepustnosti med usnjem in konstelacijami suše, vetra, umazanije, kamnov – elementov suše, ki ranljive naredijo tako predmete kot človeška in več-kot-človeška bitja. Prek škornjev in oken predmeti oživijo skozi to, kako se odzivajo na druge stvari, kot je

vreme (Bennett, 2010 in 2004; Barad, 2003), pa tudi skozi pripovedi, ki jih ljudje pripisujejo predmetom. Kot trdi Bryant (2022: 11): »Stvari so med seboj prepletene, a se premikajo in vibrirajo – usnjeni škornji, premočeni in neprimerni za nošenje, lahko zaradi nedavnega dežja prinesejo občutek olajšanja; premočeni škornji v času žetve pa so lahko frustrirajoči, saj zavirajo žetev.« Stiska se kaže v trenutku, ko ženske sezujejo škornje, jih obujejo in jih vidijo, kako stojijo v vrsti ob vratih.

Ženske so pojasnile, da je »suho [kar se nanaša tudi na dolgotrajno sušo v Avstraliji] v bistvu na mojem telesu«. Občutile so, da je suša njihova telesa navzven zaznamovala z umazanijo, saj so močni vetrovi ob suši po posestvu razpihovali dragoceno rodovitno prst, ki se je usedala na predmete, prijemala na telesa in krmilna korita. Opazovale so drevesa, ki so se zibala v močnem vetru, škripanje vetrnic in zvok umazanije, ki je udarjala ob okna, pa sta v njih vzbudila občutek stiske.

Ženske so poročale, da jim je zvok kamenja, ki udarja ob steklene plošče, »šel na živce« in vzbujal tesnobo, saj jih je spominjal na zunanje vremenske dogodke. Raziskovalci, ki se ukvarjajo z nesrečami, trdijo, da prav fizično občutenje prahu v grlu ali zvoki vetra povečujejo tesnobo in da ta občutja ostanejo pri ljudeh še dolgo po dogodku. Postanejo kot »avtobiografski spomin« na sušo, saj so »senzorične informacije sestavni del travmatičnih spominov« (Knez in sod., 2021: 1). Veter, umazanija in vročina kot elementi suše ustvarjajo utelešeno afektivno politiko (Duffy in sod., 2016; Hayes-Conroy in Hayes-Conroy, 2008; Ahmed, 2004), ki je globoko povezana in medsebojno deluje s podnebnimi spremembami (Bryant, 2022). To je zato, ker tisto, kar se čuti, zazna, sliši in vidi, sproža čustva (Duffy in sod., 2016), zvoki suše, ki jih povzročajo močni sunki vetra, ali pa tišina in mir ustvarjajo telesne občutke. Ti telesni občutki so čustveno prepleteni s pomeni, izkušnjami in praksami podnebnih sprememb. Duffy in sodelavci (2016: 50) v razpravi o utelešenju in zvoku trdijo, da »feministična perspektiva visceralnega v ospredje postavlja telesno in obravnava zvok kot snovno (ritem, barva, biološko) in izrazno (želja, čustva, emocije in ideje) silo«. Podobno kot dela Duffy in sodelavcev (2016: 50) Škornji in vse drugo usmerja pozornost na visceralno, kar »pomeni [...] kako se odzivamo, reagiramo in smo v interakciji z gibanjem zvoka [občutki, ki jih prinašata sonce in veter] preko (čeprav prepustnih) meja našega telesa«.

Umazanija in prah, ki sta med sušo še posebej izrazita, se obrišeta s teles ali prijemata na znojna čela, ko ženske delajo na kmetiji, in na površje privrejo čustva. Čustva, povezana z ljubeznijo, skrbjo in strahom, so neločljivo povezana s pomenom kmetovanja za ženske. Ti pomeni so prepleteni s skrbjo za živali in zemljo, med sušo pa ogrožajo njihovo trenutno preživetje, finančno prihodnost in identiteto kot kmetič.

4.2.1 Skrb, stiska in izčrpanost

Suša predstavlja izziv za ženske, kako poskrbeti za živino. Ženske so na primer pojasnile, da »poskušaš storiti vse, kar je v tvoji moči za svoje živali« in da je skrb za ovce »vir ponosa« (Bryant, 2022: 16). V času suše pa »prevladujeta skrb in nemoč«, prav tako so prisotni dolgi delovni urniki, potrebni za ohranjanje živine pri življenju (Bryant, 2022: 17). Ohranjanje ovac pri življenju je pomenilo, da je bilo treba kupiti seno, kar je bilo v času suše drago in težko dostopno. Prav tako ni bilo rastlinja za prehrano ovac, zato so ženske veliko časa porabile za vožnjo bal po posestvih, ki merijo od približno 800 do 5000 hektarjev. Pri dostavi bal so ženske slednje dvigovalle s tovornjakov in jih odlagale v največji vročini dneva, preden so se preselile na naslednji ograjeni pašnik na kmetiji in nato na naslednjega, pri čemer so ta postopek ponavljale. Ena od žensk je pojasnila:

Lani se mi je hranjenje ovac zdelo neskončno. Vsak dan sem razdeljevala seno, nenehno premikala ovce na ograjene pašnike, kjer je bila krma; vsaka dva tedna sem prevažala in prodajala živino, polnila krmilnike ... [To] je vzelo veliko časa. Nekateri dnevi so minili samo s preverjanjem in krmljenjem ovac. (Bryant, 2022: 12)

Suša in stiska se v ženskih telesih kaže kot izčrpanost in potreba po vzdržljivosti, da premagajo utrujenost in še naprej skrbijo za ohranjanje živine in pridelkov. Vzdržljivost je v feministični literaturi obravnavana kot kolektivna izkušnja med ženskami v kmetijstvu, ne kot individualna lastnost ali oblika individualne odpornosti. Gre za trajno stanje preobremenjenosti, negotovosti, podnebnih sprememb in, kot navaja prej omenjena udeleženka, strukturnih in spolno zaznamovanih okoliščin suše. Izčrpanost je posledica vzdržljivosti in način, kako se vzdržljivost v telesu občuti kot obup, ki te vleče k tlom.

4.2.2 Preoblikovanje identitet

Prepustnost suše pomeni prepustnost med vzdržljivimi in izčrpanimi telesi, identitetami in pokrajino. V povezavi z grožnjo izgube kmetije in duševnim zdravjem so pogosto raziskovane identitete moških (na primer Alston in Kent, 2008). Obstaja obsežna literatura, ki se osredotoča na identitete kmetov in raziskuje vloge ali upodobitve žensk kot »pomočnic na kmetiji«, »kmetovih žena« ali »nevidnih kmetov« (Fink, 1992; Sachs, 1983) in spreminjajoče se kmečke identitete v ZDA, Evropi in Avstraliji, da bi pojasnila raznoliko in nenehno oblikovanje in preoblikovanje identitet (Whitley in Brasier, 2020; Shortall, 2014; Burton in Wilson, 2006; Bryant, 1999). V Avstraliji in drugod v medijih krožijo podobe kmetov, ki stojijo na ožganih pokrajinah in trpijo zaradi stiske (Bryant,

2022; Ward, 2005). Med participativnim snemanjem filma pa so ženske govorile o čustveni bolečini zaradi izgube – izgube živali, pridelka, kmetije in identitet.

Glede na raznoliko in spreminjajočo se naravo identitet in sušnih pokrajin so ženske v trenutkih stiske poročale, da se preoblikujejo tudi njihove identitete in samozavest. Identitete se prilagajajo spreminjajočim se vsakodnevnim navadam. Kot je dejala ena od žensk, so se njene misli o sebi preusmerile od »podjetnice« in »ustvarjalke« k »temu, da se preprosto poskušam znajti«. Kmetovanje, ki je v času suše zelo negotovo, je prav tako povezano s preoblikovanjem identitet, ki jih ženske preizprašujejo: »Če nisem več kmetica, kdo sem potem?« Izguba, povezana s podnebnimi spremembami in blaginjo, ni nujno trajna, ampak je lahko začasna, vezana na kraj in delna. Lahko gre na primer za izgubo, povezano z »biotsko raznovrstnostjo [...] in izumrtjem vrst, pa tudi za manj vidne, bolj intimne izgube, ki se nepričakovano materializirajo kot odsotnost v vsakdanjem življenju ljudi« (Tschakert in sod., 2017: 5). Tako ženske morda doživljajo ali pa tudi ne doživljajo klinične depresije ali tesnobe kot posledice podnebnih kriz, kot je suša, vendar doživljajo izgubo, povezano s krajem in s tem, kako razumejo same sebe in svojo prisotnost v svetu. Med podnebnimi krizami se lahko poudari tisto, kar kmetice štejejo za dragoceno in pomembno v svojem vsakdanjem življenju – izguba jasno izpostavi vrednost krajine, živali in identitet (Bryant, 2022; Tschakert in sod., 2017). Izguba lahko spodkopava ali ogroža poklicne identitete v kmetijstvu, nekatere raziskave pa so to grožnjo opisale kot ustvarjanje »prehodne bolečine«, prekrite s strahom, jezo, obupom in nemočjo (Kump in sod., 2026: 2). Ta obup lahko vodi v samomor, kot so ugotovile raziskave o moških v kmetijstvu, pri čemer je malo raziskav, ki se osredotočajo na ženske in samopoškodovanje ter samomor.

5 ZAKLJUČEK

V nekaterih geografskih kontekstih, kot so Avstralija, Velika Britanija, Kanada in ZDA, je prišlo do »maskulinizacije stiske«, povezane z maskulinizacijo dela v kmetijstvu. Ta maskulinizacija dela in kmeta kot subjekta je zmanjšala vidnost žensk kot dejanskih kmetic, ki delajo v težkih pogojih, so odgovorne za finance, živino in pridelke in katerih telesa v času suše prav tako trpijo. Ženske, ki so sodelovale pri snemanju filma *Škornji in vse drugo* (angl. *Boots n' All*), so delile svoje zgodbe o dolгих delovnih urnikih v vročini, močnem vetru in o tem, kako so morale kljub obupu in izčrpanosti še naprej siliti svoja telesa. Pojasnile so, da so njihovi strahovi predstavljali temelj za stisko, ko je bilo krme za ovce malo in ko je veter odpihnil hranila z zgornje plasti prsti.

Film kot raziskovalna metoda je omogočil vpogled v določen trenutek v času in v ženska telesa v gibanju v naravokulturah – kako so zvoki, občutki in prizori vplivali na njihova čustva. Film je jasno pokazal, da se v času suše stiska doživlja neprestano, prepustnost suše pa pomeni, da prodre skozi delovne škornje in okna v dom. Za ženske je utelešena narava stiske med sušo tudi živeta stiska, ki je neizogibna zaradi prepuščanja snovi, kot sta umazanija in veter, v telesa, in odsotnosti ločitve med kmetijskimi stavbami in pokrajino. O izkušnjah žensk s stisko in sušo je še veliko neznanega. Film je le začetek opozarjanja na ženske živete izkušnje s stisko in sušo in odpira nadaljnja vprašanja o stiski in dejanjih žensk v času suše, zlasti v povezavi s skrbjo za skupnost. Prav tako odpira pomembna vprašanja o metodah in opozarja na vprašanje, kako lahko nadaljujemo raziskovanje stisk kmetic, ki omogoča zajemanje večsenzoričnih vidikov stiske.

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