



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Landscape Architecture,  
Horticulture and Crop Production Science

## **Gender, Nature and Small-Scale Farming**

- Women's narratives about gender and view of nature in relation to its impact on organic farming

## **Genus, Natur och Småskaligt Jordbruk**

- Kvinnors berättelser om genus och natursyn i relation till dess inverkan på ekologiskt jordbruk

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## Foreword

The topic of choice is based on my very own interest, as well as my responsibility to learn more about agroecology and the essential elements included. The path I chose was to dig deeper into the concept of human and social values. This, because of my hope to get a better insight in, and to get a better understanding of, farming systems in relation to gender as a part of my personal aspiration of not being uninformed and ignorant to potential, and sometimes overlooked, shortcomings in an otherwise positive sector that strives for a more sustainable food industry. Lack of knowledge and understanding is, according to me, a result of active ignorance. Therefore, I want to use this opportunity to learn more about what I find relevant and interesting as a complement to what I've already learnt throughout the Agroecology Master's Programme.

Agroecology has taught me a lot about holistic systems thinking, yet there are so much more to learn and two years of studying are not enough. Nevertheless, I have developed a perception of agroecology as something more political than usually being expressed in the teaching. This, partly because I have come across politically oriented articles and literature about agroecology that I find important to highlight, but also because of different discussions during classes in combination with field studies and interactions with farmers.

My personal view of farming, agroecology and everything that is woven into its many patterns has been shaped already in my early years. During my childhood I have observed my grandparents working on their farm, and I have uncountable times listened to the stories told by my grandmother about her life. These stories were always characterized by her as a farmer, a mother and a farmer's wife, but also guided by her as the person she is behind those characters. I deeply respect my grandparents hard work and dedication to their farm. Still, I respect even more, but do not envy, my grandmother's commitment, strength and discipline in her many roles as the woman she is. I say that I 'do not envy', because along with her idyllic life that for some seem like a dream, I have observed the struggle of a woman married into the role as a farmer's wife, mother of four and still working at least as much as any male farmer I've met and heard about. Her life has been framed by work and duties, both on-farm and as a housekeeper. From my personal perspective it has always been characterized by the understanding of gendered norms that distinguishes male from female coded characteristics, values and activities.

The other part affecting my view on farming in relation to gender comes from my parents. They have for most of my life worked together side by side with cultivation of many kinds. They have from day one worked together and shared the work between them both on and off

farm, even though some activities are done mostly by my father or mother respectively. Still, their cooperation has taught me that there are exceptions in the farming sector where both partners cooperate under the same terms and conditions. It doesn't have to be the way my grandparents lived their lives. Due to these personal experiences of mine, of being right in the middle of farming cultures and traditions that extend over two generations, I've automatically developed a critical as well as an admiring eye for farming and agriculture, as well as a good insight. This is also why this thesis is written, and I would like to say that it, as well as my studies at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, is a result of what I've witnessed.

My two years at the Agroecology Master's Programme have given me a lot of understanding of how a sustainable food system can be developed. It has also taught me to be critical and to see different small parts creating bigger pictures. However, as mentioned, two years are not enough in order to learn it all, and the time is not enough to include all aspects. I have thus felt that some aspects have been missing, such as the aspect of social sustainability that agriculture and food systems can create or deplete. That is why I have chosen to include gender and equity in my thesis. Because for me, agroecology is the only recognized and established concept of agriculture that truly involves human and social values. Also, that truly admits the flaws of modern agriculture on every level.

## Abstract

Agroecology is both the science, the practice and the movement of sustainable food systems whose meaning includes several dimensions. In this thesis, the social aspect of agroecology is in focus, with emphasis on gendering and gender equality. This, because male domination for a long time has imbued the agricultural sector, and lately, this patriarchal structure has also become a part of, and gained support among capitalistic and misogynic forces. In agriculture and within the world's food supply, there are imbalances of power relations where only a few voices have monopoly on how food is to be produced and how nature is supposed to be used by humans, as well as for whom. Within the agriculture there are structures of both racism, classism and sexism, as well as ample space for these oppressions to be constantly recreated as a result of, among other things, social constructions. People talk in terms of “women's-do” in contrast to “being a man”. Likewise, some argue that organic agriculture is unsustainable for the economy and for the food supply, while environmentally friendly approaches often are valued lower than conventional. On the other hand, supporters of agroecological, ecological and gender sciences are critical of the unsustainable methods used in modern agriculture and strive thus for a change. That means, in short terms, to protect and maintain the agriculture's environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability.

In Sweden, conventional agriculture today is the normal way of farming and the stereotypical image of the male farmer still exist in people's perception of who manages farms. However, the number of female farmers increases while the number of farmers in general decreases. In addition, the demand for ecologically grown food is growing in line with people's increased interest in health, lifestyle and the care for the environment.

In this study, seven women who own and operate ecological farms have been interviewed. They have told about themselves, their farm and their experiences and thoughts about the sector, which has been in relation to their understanding of, and attitude towards, gender and their view on environment and nature. It has been of interest to see how their business and motivation may have been affected by their experiences in relation to their standpoints. As well as to analyze the processes behind recreation of gender applied on agriculture.

A thematic analysis of the interview illustrated different themes and conclusions that determine in what the majority of the women have in common in their narratives. These themes are in turn compared to specific processes within which gendered structures are recreated in organizations. The theories used in the analysis, a part from the elements of agroecology, are systems thinking and feminist standpoint theory. Within the theory of feminist standpoint

theory, other concepts are also described as tools to understand the result and conduct an analysis.

The analysis illuminates the following conclusions: Firstly, the stories that the women directly, or indirectly, tell, testify to gendered structures in the sector that are linked to the distribution and division of both expectations, labor and skills; to the interaction between men and women; as well as self-identification. Secondly, the agricultural sector, conventional as organic, is very much imbued by processes that creates gendered. This becomes visible in the relationship between the two farming types, which is affecting, and effected by, gender coding. This, in turn have an indirect impact on both women and men within farming. However, the women in this study express that they do not allow any potential inequalities, thus claiming their agency. This is in line with the third conclusion: The women's work is driven by their huge conviction of "doing right" according to ecological principles, which can also be derived from gendered structures in processes that include norms and ideals that affect creation of identity. The conviction of choosing a lifestyle that includes environmentally sustainable principles compensates for the backside of the profession such as poor profitability and long working days. This, although their profession and lifestyle require the following, and fourth, conclusion: A complementary activity to the farming itself is necessary for the vast majority in the study. This need is also partly linked to gendered structures in the sector, where female coded methods are valued lower, thus negatively affecting the conditions for organic farmers.

**Keywords:** agroecology, farming women, gender, inequalities, organic farming, social nature, sustainability

## Svensk sammanfattning

Agroekologi är både vetenskapen, praktiken samt rörelsen om hållbara livsmedelssystem vars innebörd rymmer flera dimensioner. I detta arbete är det den sociala aspekten av agroekologi som är i fokus, med största betoning på genus och jämställdhet. Detta, på grund av att manlig dominans länge har präglat jordbruket, och på senare tid har denna könade struktur även fått sällskap av, och gehör hos, kapitalistiska krafter. Inom jordbruket och matförsörjningen i världen råder en obalans av maktrelationer, där endast ett fåtal aktörer förfogar över det största inflytandet på hur mat skall produceras och hur naturen skall brukas av människan, samt för vem. Inom jordbruket finns strukturer av både rasism, klassism, och sexism, samt gott om spelrum för dessa förtryck att ständigt återskapas som en följd av bl.a. sociala konstruktioner. Det talas om ”kvinnogöra” i kontrast till att ”vara man”. Likaså, menar vissa att ekologiskt lantbruk är ohållbart för ekonomin och matförsörjningen samtidigt som miljövänligare tillvägagångssätt ofta värderas lägre än konventionella. Å andra sidan ställer sig anhängare till vetenskapen om agroekologi, ekologi och genus, sig kritiska till de ohållbara metoder som används i det moderna jordbruket och strävar efter en förändring. En förändring som i korta drag innebär att värna om jordbrukets miljömässiga, ekonomiska och sociala aspekter av hållbarhet.

I Sverige är det konventionella jordbruket idag det normala och den stereotypa bilden av den manliga lantbrukaren finns fortfarande kvar i folks föreställningar om vem som driver gårdar. Faktum är dock, att antalet kvinnliga lantbrukare ökar samtidigt som antalet bönder generellt sett minskar. Dessutom växer efterfrågan på ekologiskt odlade livsmedel i takt med människors ökade intresse för både hälsa, livsstil och miljö.

I denna studie har sju kvinnor, som äger och driver ekologiska gårdar, blivit intervjuade. De har själva fått berätta om sina erfarenheter och tankar kring jordbruksnäringen, vilket har varit i relation till deras förståelse av, och inställning till, genus samt deras syn på miljö och natur. Det har varit av intresse att se hur deras verksamhet och motivation eventuellt påverkas av deras erfarenheter och ståndpunkt, likväl som att analysera processerna bakom ett återskapande av könade strukturer applicerat på jordbruk.

En tematisk analys av intervjuerna åskådliggör olika teman och slutsatser som bottnar i vad majoriteten av kvinnorna har gemensamt i sina berättelser. Dessa teman är i sin tur jämförda med särskilda processer från tidigare forskning inom vilka könade strukturer återskapas i organisationer. Teorierna som används i analysen utöver agroekologins koncept, är systems

thinking och feminist standpoint theory. Inom feminist standpoint theory beskrivs även olika begrepp som alla agerar verktyg till att kunna förstå resultatet och genomföra en analys.

I analysen framkommer det att:

Berättelserna som kvinnorna direkt, eller indirekt, berättar, vittnar om könade strukturer i jordbruket som är kopplade till fördelningen av både förväntningar, arbetssysslor och kompetens; till interaktionen mellan män och kvinnor; samt till självidentifiering. Dessutom är jordbruksnäringen, konventionell som ekologisk, präglad av processer som skapar könade strukturer. Detta blir synligt i förhållandet mellan de två jordbrukstyperna, som både påverkar, och påverkas av, könskodning. Detta har i sin tur en indirekt inverkan på både kvinnorna och män i deras arbete. Däremot uttrycker kvinnorna i denna studie att de inte tillåter några eventuella ojämlikheter påverka dem i deras arbete, och gör därmed anspråk på sitt agentskap. Detta är sammankopplat med nästa slutsats: Kvinnornas arbete drivs av deras enorma övertygelse om att ”göra rätt” enligt ekologiska principer, vilket också kan härledas till könade strukturer i processer som innefattar norm och ideal vilket påverkar identitetsskapandet. Övertygelsen om att välja en livsstil som innefattar miljömässigt hållbara principer kompenserar för yrkets baksidor, så som dålig lönsamhet och långa arbetsdagar. Detta, trots att deras yrke och livsstil kräver följande: En kompletterande verksamhet till själva gårdsarbetet är nödvändigt för de allra flesta kvinnorna i studien. Detta behov är också delvis kopplat till könade strukturer i jordbruket där kvinnligt kodade metoder värderas lägre, och som därigenom påverkar förutsättningarna för ekologiska bönder negativt.

“A sustainable agriculture must balance the needs of ecological soundness, economic viability and social equity.”

Stephen R. Gliessman (1995:45)

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to all the women who are my main inspiration for conducting this thesis. First and foremost, I dedicate this to my mother, and to my grandmother, two of the strongest people I know. Also, to the other admirable women in my family, whose life stories also have inspired me.

Finally, I would also like to dedicate this study to all the other women doing farming, in one way or another. It is my deepest wish that the conditions for women to conduct farming will be better. That it will be equal and worthy. Also, that the terms for organic farmers will be improved, so that organic farming finally will become the norm.

# 1. Introduction

In this chapter, the context of the thesis is summarized as a background for the very topic. This is followed by a description of the thesis' aim, and a formulation of research questions. Further, a part is included that show why the thesis is relevant for the Agroecology Master's Programme, as well as an outline of the thesis.

## 1.1. Background

From seeing farming as a process of nurturing the earth to maintain her capacity to provide food, a masculinist shift takes place which sees farming as a process of generating profits. (Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* 2016)

As the opening quote show, farmers have gone from nurturing the earth in symbiosis with the ecosystems to a more conventional agribusiness where high yields providing good profit is of highest priority, which is also applicable on the Swedish farm sector.

Sweden has a long history of farming that has developed during many years and gone through several changes (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). During the last century, the Swedish agriculture has changed especially through an expansion of farms that went from many small ones to fewer, bigger and more specialized ones (Jordbruksverket, 2005). The aim for many of the changes was to increase the effectiveness, and to do so, more and more machines got introduced on the market together with the increased use of agrochemicals (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). In short, agriculture came to be increasingly framed by intensification through mechanization and technology. Later on, during the 70s, alternative farming became more popular and some farmers began to go back to traditional farming that is more environmentally friendly. Ever since, organic farming has become more and more popular, and the proportion of organic farming in Sweden is increasing (Jordbruksverket, 2017) in line with the increasing demand for organic food (Rydén, 2007).

The development that includes farming methods is well documented, while there are more parts missing regarding who the farmers has been, especially regarding female farmers (e.g. Sachs (1983). Who they are has been more ignored compared to what they do, as well as recognizing gender inequality in rural areas in general (e.g. Little, 1987). During the last years

of research, it has however become more and more frequent to investigate this, also to do so in terms of gender. Combining gender with environmental and agricultural research has been the case only for the last decades, and gender is now reasonably well recognized as important to include (Arora-Jonsson, 2014).

The Swedish body of research on gender within farming show, for example, the presence of gender inequality regarding unequal rights to inheritance for men and women, due to culture and tradition, as well as the unequal influence in decision-making processes (Näringsdepartementet, 2004). Distribution of labor is also shown to be gendered, due to the coding of what's male and female which is very much affecting the sector (e.g. (Brandth, 2002; Cassel & Pettersson, 2015; Andersson, 2016; Brandth & Haugen, 2016a). However, there are still quite few studies made on gender and organization within agriculture in Sweden (Pettersson & Arora-Jonsson, 2009). But even here, there are signs on gender and especially how the traditional understanding of masculinity and femininity is affecting organizations. When studying this, it is crucial to see the many dimensions of gender and farming. One way is to acknowledge, not only how gendered patterns are manifested, but also how gendering is being done. That is, to recognize what processes contribute to a recreation of gender (Bacchi, 2017). As Pettersson and Arora-Jonsson (2009) stresses it, there is a challenging complexity when studying gender and organization in agriculture, which makes it difficult and requires a multifaceted perspective in order to understand it. That is also why there is a need for more research on this issue, since gendering is a part of many processes.

## 1.2. Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore and give emphasis to the relationship between sustainable farming and gendering, and furthermore to do so on organic small-scale farms through the eyes of female farm owners in the southernmost province of Sweden: Scania. This, to enhance an understanding of the gendered structure within organic farming. Furthermore, the aim is to explore the processes on farm-level according to women's own narratives and how their experiences of gendered farming affects their motivation of running a farm as well as its impacts on the actual farming. It will be studied in the broader context of a male-dominated agricultural sector that overall faces an expansion of a conventional and industrialized food system, despite the growing discourse, and consensus, that this is neither socially, economically nor environmentally sustainable. Also, taken into account that the number of Swedish farmers

decreases while the number of female farmers increases (Jordbruksverket, 2011), the second research question will be potentially fruitful in this study.

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the research questions are formulated as following:

- How are gendered patterns in agriculture manifested according to the experiences of organic female farm owners in Scania (Skåne) in relation to their understanding of gender?
  - How do these patterns affect the terms of organic, female, farm owners in Scania, considering the core themes in organic food systems: economic, environmental and social sustainability?
- How does the perception of nature/ecology affect the motivation for female farm owners in Scania to conduct organic farming, considering that the number of female farmers is increasing in Sweden while farmers in general are decreasing?

### 1.3. Relevance for Agroecology

A gender-sensitive approach to the discipline and practice of agriculture and agroecology is essential for the fulfillment and realization of an agroecological concept (Development, 2015). The approach of emphasizing gender and promote women's role in agriculture is also stated by the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology (SOCLA) as well as by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to be the correct way when conducting agroecological sciences and practices (Third World Network & SOCLA, 2015). Even so, there is a lack of a gender perspective in many researches within the field of agricultural development (Kay *et al.*, 2016). Kay *et al.* (2016), therefore stresses the importance of including female farmers' knowledge within research as well as recognizing their participation in, and contribution to creating sustainable food systems, in all geographical contexts. When this have been done, research show how agroecology combined with a gender sensitive approach, many problems caused by gendering structures have decreased (e.g. Schwendler & Thompson, 2017). The combination of these sciences, when put into practice, is a tool that manage to break traditional structures of gender, such as division of labor. This, since its approach challenges stereotype norms of men and women, starting by giving voice to everyone as well as equal opportunities to give and receive knowledge (*ibid*).

One of the keystones in agroecology is to encourage participation from all farmers in order to preserve, protect and make use of their valuable knowledge instead of overlooking it (Rosset & Altieri, 1997). Women must therefore be included in the study and practice of agroecology, both as participants and as leaders with equal influence in decision-making in order to provide vital insights. The importance of a gender-sensitive approach and gender equality within the agricultural sector does not only have an impact on the role of women, but also the entire agribusiness and the worlds strive towards food security and a more sustainable food system (FAO, 2011a).

Closing the gender gap in agriculture would generate significant gains for the agricultural sector and for society. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17 percent (FAO, 2011b:5).

There are several studies on masculinity and femininity in the field of agricultural sciences (e.g. Brandth & Haugen, 2016a) as well as the gender equality aspect of family farming (e.g. Andersson, 2014; Pettersson & Heldt Cassel, 2014; Cassel & Pettersson, 2015). Yet, in the academic field of gendered elements and gender roles in contemporary organic farming and agroecology, as well as women's experience of these issues has been studied to a limited extent in the Swedish and the European context. Further, studies of agroecology with a gender-sensitive approach and/or connected to women's empowerment are more likely to be found in the African and South American context (García Rocés & Soler Motiel, 2010; Siliprandi, 2010; Molua, 2011; Tittonell *et al.*, 2012; de Marco Larrauri *et al.*, 2016). This can although be explained by Brazil, Cuba and Nigeria being the three countries where agroecology has been studied the most<sup>1</sup> (Gómez *et al.*, 2013). Accordingly, this study is thought to conduct a research with women in Scania as interviewees, to acknowledge their personal experiences, opinions and knowledge. The intention is to use empiric data and situated knowledge in an interdisciplinary study with the aspiration to provide additional information and insight to the body of research on the gendered nature of organic farming in a Swedish context. By doing so, the effects of gendering on female farmers and their work, as well as the agricultural sector, can be better understood.

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to a study reviewing articles where the word "agroecology" had to be in the title as a criterion.

## 1.4. Disposition

Chapter 1 presents the background of the topic as well as the aim of conducting the thesis. This is followed by a formulation of the research questions and the thesis' relevancy to the Agroecology Master's Programme.

Chapter 2 provides an explanation of the study's material and methodology: narrative inquiry, semi-structured interviews and context review. Furthermore, data analysis, demarcations and ethical aspects of the study are also described.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework that guides the analysis of the thesis, but also the study in general. Apart from the overall framework of agroecology, the adopted theories are systems thinking and feminist standpoint theory.

Chapter 4 presents the results from the interviews and is structured based key concepts from the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5 includes a thematic analysis where the theoretical frameworks and the result is combined, shaping an analysis with connections to previous research presented in chapter 2 and relevant concepts in the theories explained in chapter 4.

Chapter 6 presents a further discussion on the analysis with additional reflections and possible interpretations. Also, critical reflections are formulated regarding the topic and the methodology. This is followed by further considerations of future research.

Chapter 7 sums up the thesis with an overall conclusion of its findings and implications.

Chapter 8 finally presents a list of references used throughout the thesis.

Conclusively, a list of appendices is attached including a literature review that digs deeper into the background of the topic and explains necessary information about its context which is built on previous research. Organic and conventional farming is briefly described, as well as agricultural developments and trends in Sweden. Finally, gendering in agriculture is presented. This is followed by an interview letter, informed consent letter, and interview guides.

## 2. Methodology and Material

In this chapter, the methods are described. In order to bring insightful answers to the research questions, the study will be conducted with qualitative methods. The primary sources of knowledge are semi-structured interviews that were conducted with seven women owning organic farms in Scania. Secondary sources providing fruitful understanding of the subject are additionally used. These are collected through a review of the context, presented in Appendix A.

Apart from agroecology, the method is framed by the theoretical frameworks of feminist standpoint theory and systems thinking which will be explained further in chapter 4.

### 2.1. Narrative inquiry

Based on the research aim to explore how women owning organic farms in Scania experience and understand their situation in today's agriculture, a qualitative case study is assessed to be especially suitable to conduct (Yin, 2014). As e.g. chapter 2 shows, there has been a strong dominance of a masculine and male perspective in research on farming, and with a much weaker focus on the perspective and representation of women. Thus, in order to both better understand farming in general and women's subjective experiences of farming in particular, women's perspectives and narratives are a significant source and unit of analysis. This is an approach that together with intersectional perspectives is early adopted by critical feminist researchers providing knowledge about women in farming (Sachs, 1983). A qualitative research is suitable concerning the study's aim and theoretical framework of a feminist perspective (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research methods will contribute to a wider, still personally detailed, understanding of people's perceptions and experiences of their own lives in relation to external factors (Frost, 2011).

The primary source is the narratives told by the farmers themselves, and when describing one's life, it is very much connected with the creation of one's identity (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). The method also provides a possibility for the women to create a meaning about their lives, how it is and why. This, in turn, is affected by the women's individual context and background. Regarding this source of data, a narrative inquiry is considered as relevant since it embraces the very narratives (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Within this method, words

that are being expressed based on the experience of people are believed to provide more trustworthy information compared to numbers, that in contrast are considered to leave important information behind (ibid).

## 2.2. Semi-structured Interviews

Using semi-structured interviews are appropriate from a feminist perspective by providing more equal relations between the researcher and the participant (Bryman, 2012). Also, this method is more suitable than in-depth interviews considering that this study has a time limit. Semi-structured interviews also entail more fluent interviews where the interviewee gets more time and flexibility to answer the questions as he or she feels like, in contrast to structured interviews where the questions are premade (Bryman, 2012). In order to extract as reliable and valuable information as possible, the researcher must focus on creating a comfortable atmosphere during the interviews and simultaneously avoid a risk of unequal relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee which has been argued to be the potential scenario during structured interviews. Therefore, there is an awareness that the interviewer/researcher holds a specific position in relation to the interviewee and consequently the researcher's role of being sensitive and attentive, still impartial, towards the participants' narratives emerge. Also, there is an awareness of time and space and how this effects the interview and its outcome (Haraway, 1988). In relation to the understanding of the researcher's role, the position of the researcher is not neglected, rather observed, as it unavoidably affects the actual result.

Concerning the method and the theoretical framework, the study embraces and emphasizes the participant's lived experiences and narratives as the primary source of knowledge according to the feminist standpoint perspective (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). This, within the contextualized interplay with other agroecological elements with reference to systems thinking (Arnold & Wade, 2015). There exists an awareness in this paper that since the results of this thesis is built on an analysis of a few personal interpretations and experiences, the overall body of knowledge in the result may be partial. Nevertheless, the personal narratives are of no less weight for the final results since it is the participants lived realities and standpoints that provide fruitful and unique knowledge (Hill Collins, 2009).

The collection of data was conducted by one-to-one, semi-structured interviews. Each interview was audio-recorded and additional notes were taken directly afterwards. The interviews took about one to one and a half hour. The actual meeting with each and every interviewee were although longer due to introductions and observations of the farms. The

purpose of recording was to avoid misinterpretations and risks of missing details in the later process of analyzing the data. The sample size was decided so that it would be able to conduct a deeper analysis, with enough data, of which it was expected to reach theoretical saturation through the collection of data from the interviewees. The selection of interviewees was based on the criteria that the selected ones are women, and owners' agricultural firms producing organic food products on small-scale level. The farm size is somewhat guided by statistics telling that agricultural firms within the enterprise type 'sole proprietorship' constitutes 91 % of the farmland in Sweden (Jordbruksverket, 2015). Just over half of these enterprises have the size of at least 30 hectares. Although, it is good to be aware of the methodological variations considering the term of 'small-scale farms' which varies depending on country and continent in relation to average farm size as well as GDP (Lowder *et al.*, 2016). On a global measurement on farm sizes, a farm under 2 ha is defined as small. Referring to Swedish conditions, the average farm size is 37 ha (SCB, 2013).

Seven farmers were interviewed during six different occasions during March and April 2018 at times and places that have suited best for the interviewees. All farmers live and operate in Scania, from south to east, north to west. They are between 30 and 55 years old and are the ones owning the farms whether or not they run the business together with their partners. The interviews took between one and one and a half hour to complete. All were carried out on the farmer's farm, in their home, except from one that were done at a café in Malmö.

The decision of choosing small-scale farms is based on the concept of agroecology. It tells us that small-scale farming with sustainable farming methods are an essential respond to the world's industrial and global agriculture which is mainly focused on large monocultures that requires a lot of agrochemicals and which yield is exported all over the globe (Altieri, 2009).

A preliminary interview guide (Appendix D) was prepared before the interviews in order to collect as valuable information as possible and conduct the interviews in a proper way. Agroecological themes and principles formed the very basis for the guide which was further shaped by the theoretical framework. With FAO's 10 key elements of agroecology grounded in environmental, social and economic aspects themes were formulated for further thematic analysis. These are described further in the theoretical framework.

Additional perspectives were also taken into consideration when conducting the interviews. Similar to the key elements defined by FAO (see table 2), Gamble, Wallace and Thies (1996) have addressed perspectives to use when analyzing a farming system: historical; production system; financial; productivity; external influences; management; marketing/selling; maintenance of farm resources; business structures and ownership; and the people/human

activity system perspective (Gamble *et al.*, 1996). These were regarded as a relevant complement to the key elements and especially in consideration of systems thinking.

After being familiar with the first version of the interview guide, this was edited from a quite structured and detailed one into a semi-structured guide (Appendix E) in order to conduct semi-structured interviews not strictly led by too many questions. The second and final version of the guide were structured so that the details from the first version still had a chance to be included in the interviews through broad and open questions were there were space enough for the interviews to be relaxed and possible to somewhat customize according to each individual occasion.

In the beginning of every interview, the farmers were asked to read an Informed Consent Letter (Appendix C.) and to sign it, in order to document their voluntariness to participate as well as their assignment of necessary information and approval of recording.

## 2.3. Data analysis

In order to analyze the data from all interviews, a transcription of each interview recording was made. The transcripts, in turn, were reviewed several times to find themes relevant in relation to the research questions by conducting a thematic analysis. This study has a deductive form of research due to previous research on gendering in agriculture showing differences between farmers based on gender. Although, it is considered to be important to also include inductive coding and be open to potential differences and emerging themes regardless of the theory which also may contradict what is stated in previous research. Thus, the analysis is a combination of both inductive and deductive coding, i.e. themes that repeatedly emerged within the collected data through horizontal analysis were identified as well as themes related to the theoretical frameworks and their themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This, regarding the notion of the researcher as active and influencing the very outcome of the analysis, which makes it accurate to partly have a relevant theory to rely on and partly identifying potential themes that might emerge irrespective of the theory. In this thesis, the analysis of the interviews has been guided by both Bryman's (2012) and Braun and Clarke's (2006) description of thematic analysis, and the identification of themes were conducted based on Bryman's definition of themes:

a category identified by the analyst through his/her data; that relates to his /her research focus (and quite possibly the research questions; that builds on codes identified in transcripts and/or field notes; and that provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his or her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus (2012:580).

The themes were thus identified by looking at repetitive topics in the interview transcripts that make sense in relation to the research questions, as well as similarities and differences between different transcripts (Bryman, 2012). This, both irrespective and respective of the theoretical framework. Ways of how the interviewees expressed themselves and used the language by using metaphors and conjunctions to change or connect topics were analyzed. Bryman (2012) additionally refers to Ryan and Bernard's (2003) recommendation of observing missing data to question why some topics or questions are less responded than others might be, which also was considered through the analysis.

As mentioned, the first step was to transcribe the interview recordings, as recommended by Bryman (2012) and Braun & Clarke (2006). Every transcription was then carefully read and reread in the search for codes and eventually themes. First, initial codes were identified within each and every transcription and then by comparing the transcripts with each other. During the first reviews, themes were identified solely based on commonalities in the data material without any connection to any coding frame. Then, coding was conducted in consideration of the theoretical frameworks and the context. Identified codes were then divided, gathered and categorized in different themes throughout the whole process of analyzing, always with the research questions and frameworks in mind.

When presenting the deductively and inductively coded interview material, quotations were frequently used in order to retell the women's narrative as precisely as possible and to minimize the risk of misinterpretation and distort their words. Using the theoretical framework as a tool helped to categorize the themes that were found during the analysis.

### 2.3.1. Sample Collection

The criteria of the interviewees, as mentioned, was that they were females, owning farms in Scania, conducting organic farming and that the farms were small-scale correspondingly with Swedish measurements regarding both revenue, number of employees and size.

An internet search was made in order to find potential interviewees. The organizations Sveriges Småbrukare (Sweden's smallholders) and Ekologiska Lantbrukarna (Organic farmers) were contacted in order to find more people and resulted in one interviewee. Hushållningssällskapet (Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies) was also contacted and resulted in a few recommendations on potential interviewees. During the interviews and the meetings with farmers, the method of snowball sampling was also used. When conducting a study that includes a specific and rather small group of people, this method is fruitful in order

to find participants (Browne, 2005). The farmers themselves often had contact with other women doing farming similarly. Therefore, they could recommend other potential participants. One of the farmers even invited her friend to conduct the interview together with her.

First, letters were sent out to ten individuals (Appendix B), explaining the background of the thesis as well as the purpose of the interviews. From these ten letters, two resulted in completed interviews. Further, another ten letters were sent out to ten other individuals. Within one week after the letters had been sent out, a follow-up on potential participation was made by phone or email to further decide when and where the interviews should take place in accordance with the interviewee's preferences. It was not all of the contacted farmers who participated in an interview. This, because some did not want to, while some didn't have the time.

Regarding the demarcations of this thesis, it was difficult to decide in advance whether the farmers were allowed to have a complementary job or not. The very first thought was that they would work full-time on the farm with no need to work extra. During the interviews, and the search for interviewees, it got clearer and clearer that the reality was different than expected. Some of the farmers had an extra job, and some did not. Some had a partner whose income also contributed to the household, while some didn't. Still, everyone except two expressed that it was tough financially. However, most of them were convinced that the money did not play a big part. The most important thing was always that they could do what they wanted.

### 2.3.2. Presentation of the Participants

All interviewees have received the information that they will not be mentioned by name in the study. None of them wished to be promised more anonymity or confidentiality. When they've expressed that "this, you don't need to include" or anything similar, this has been deleted from the transcripts. Additionally, some parts have been omitted with respect to their personal life and privacy because they are considered to be too private for the study and not necessary to include despite their potentially interesting meaning. Still, if those parts have shown a certain attitude or characteristic, this have been taken into consideration within the thematic analysis.

Farmer 1: owner of a KRAV-certified farm in northwest of Scania, has a college degree within agriculture. She specializes in some crops but also grows a large number of others. The husband is partly involved with the farm. She has previously worked, among other things, as a teacher and at an authority. Through previous employments she established good contacts with farmers and growers and got a good insight in the business of agriculture.

Farmer 2: owner of a KRAV-certified cultivation in northeast of Scania, educated within healthcare. She has been working with horticulture before and has participated in a shorter cultivation course. Started her business in the beginning of 2000, which consists of vegetable and berry cultivation. She combines the work on the farm with another job off-farm. Her husband has his own farming business.

Farmer 3: owner of a KRAV-certified permacultural farm/garden in southeast of Scania, has a degree in gardening. She has been travelling around Europe living and working on different farms. Established her own business with vegetable and berry production for almost fifteen years ago.

Farmer 4: owner of a KRAV-certified farm on which she has cows, pigs and hens. Produces meat, milk, egg, butter, cheese etc. both for the household and for sale. Grew up on the neighbouring farm whose land she also manages today and where she learned about farming.

Farmer 5: lamb breeder and vegetable grower with an college degree in natural resource use. She owns a small-scale farm which is similar to the concept of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), since she sells her products to customers signing up for boxes with seasonal products. She has horses, cows, sheep and hens, produces vegetables, meat and sheepskin for sale.

Farmer 6: owner of a KRAV-certified farm with milk and meat production, which she runs together with her husband. They took over the farm from his parents and were the ones converting it to organic. It is the largest farm in the study both by area and revenue. She studied agriculture in college and has worked as tractor driver and on other milk farms.

Farmer 7: owner of a “knowledge center”, as she calls it, where sustainable construction and permacultural farming is being combined with courses on those themes. She has the experience of travelling around Europe where she developed her own vision about the center. She has a degree within social services.

### 2.3.3. Demarcations

The importance of having a holistic perspective when analyzing farm systems is a crucial part also in this thesis. Yet, with the important interconnection between sub-systems in mind, this thesis intends to focus mainly on the people/human activity sub-system: an equally fundamental part of the agricultural system (Checkland, 1995).

In order to get as liable and significant information as possible the research has some relevant delimitations. These are based on the context of the thesis and other important elements. The participants are all women, and owners of an organic farm on which they work full-time. Any side business that are connected to the farm's food production, such as a farm shop, processing and sale of products on markets or through retailers, are accepted to be included. The farm shall be rather small-scale, referring to Swedish dimensions. The organic production must not follow requirements or regulations from a specific certification, but need to be defined by the owners as organic/sustainable in terms of no use of agrochemicals, a complex crop production etc. This, considering the costs of becoming certified which can be seen as a limitation among farmers and thus a reason of not doing so regardless of the price (Burton *et al.*, 1999). Instead, the fundamental requirement is that the production is organic and considered sustainable by the owners rather than registered within an organic certification. The geographical limitation to focus on Scania, is based on the statement that gendered norms may differ geographically (Chiappe & Butler Flora, 1998), the average farm size as well (Lowder *et al.*, 2016), and that the climate and weather conditions are more similar in a limited area. The delimitations are meant to create a more homogenous sample where the individuals have some crucial features in common, in pursuance of collecting important data feasible for comparison in the analyze (Frost, 2011).

To interview male owners of organic farms could have provided a broader picture of the gendered nature within organic farming. Although, it was not the aim of this thesis to conduct a comparative study since the body of research regarding agriculture in general is representing men's view and perspective on farming. Rather than conducting a comparative study including male farmers once again, the aim here was to let farming women own their stories by giving their narratives space in the result of this thesis and use them as situated knowledge. Therefore, male farmers perspective is considered to be interesting but not relevant in this study according to the aim and framework.

To interview more women would of course have been interesting and contributing to the thesis and its results, since the number of interviewees and their narratives are not representative for all women owning farms. However, the study is time limited. Moreover, the aim of this

study is not to generalize every female farm owner's situation. Then, this thesis would have been done through different methods. It is also considered not to be fair to generalize according to the farmer's individual experiences and the situated knowledge that they possess. Instead, the data collected through the interviews is aimed at contributing with detailed information in order to give insight, and still multifaceted responds, to the research questions.

## 2.4. Ethical Aspects

In the preparation of finding interviewees and formulating the interview guide, several ethical aspects were considered in accordance with fundamental research ethics with informed consent as first priority. Complete confidentiality has not been promised to the participants and has neither been asked for, but anonymity has been promised them as far as possible. However, their names are not mentioned as well as some private information that has been excluded from transcripts and thesis. All necessary information about the study and its purpose has been communicated with the participants, as well as the study's methods, the voluntariness of participating and the participants' right to cancel their participation. Information has also been given about the participants right to decide whether the interview can be recorded or not.

The role of the researcher has also been considered regarding how it might affect the interviewees answers depending on the researcher's gender, skin-color, age, class or general appearance. However, the answers appear to be honest, trustworthy and openhearted. The quality of the data is therefore considered not to be suffering due to these factors. However, the fact that the researcher is of the same gender and has an insight in the agricultural sector and lifestyle may lead to a better understanding of the interviewees answered regarding the lifestyle and gender equality matters. Interviewees might feel a better connection and trust if the researcher is a woman too, but it might also lead to biases in the written report if not taking this risk into account and be aware of one's position and role as researcher.

All interviews have been conducted in Swedish, as well as the transcript. The citations used in the analysis in chapter five are therefore translated from Swedish to English by the researcher. Thus, some linguistic expressions and sayings may have been changed with the translation. Still, a thorough translation and restoration of what has been said has been done to the greatest extent possible in order to avoid misinterpretations.

### 3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework of the thesis is described. The theories are feminist standpoint theory together with feminist political ecology; agroecology and systems thinking. The chosen theories are considered to be relevant to use in combination with each other regarding the aim described in chapter 1.

Systems thinking and agroecology are here considered to be general guides throughout the thesis and not the primary theories used as concrete tools in the analysis. However, systems thinking is an already implemented theory within the study of agroecology (Francis et al., 2003; Wezel & Soldat, 2009). Hence, it is considered necessary to include in the analysis even if it can be observed as an overall framework, similar to agroecology.

Feminist standpoint theory composed with relatable concepts are relevant to use regarding that the focus lies in looking at the relationship between male and female subject positions within farming, as well as the recreation of gendered structures connected to its interaction with nature and ecology. The focus thus requires a feminist sensitive approach as a complementary tool to agroecology and systems thinking. Thereby, feminist standpoint theory and involved concepts are here used as the main tools for analyzing the material.

Stephens (2013) stresses the importance of combining feminism and systems thinking when approaching ecological and environmental challenges, very much due to its rare interaction in research fields (Stephens, 2013). Stephens et al (2010) also converge the two theories of critical systems thinking and cultural ecofeminism into what the authors call “feminist-systems theory”. The two theories are compared and combined considering their commonalities such as similar language of intersectionality, common criticism, similar ethics and morality, mutual recognition of situated knowledge and its relevance etc. In the same article, the key elements of feminist-systems theory in research are formulated as following: “gender sensitivity; value voices from the margins; the environment is incorporated within research; pluralistic methodology and undertake research towards social change” (Stephens et al., 2010:383). To embrace gender sensitivity and to value voices from the margins is relatable with concepts within agroecology such as co-creation of knowledge and human and social value.

The different parts of the theoretical framework provide appropriate and fruitful tools to analyze the material. Feminist Standpoint Theory (see Harding, 2004), is presented in the first

paragraph 4.1, and is used in order to emphasize the knowledge of the women being interviewed and to give space to their voices, which constitutes the actual material of the study. Following, theories described by Acker (1990, 2006), provides tools to analyze the organization of the farms, including division of labor, as well as the tools for recognizing processes in which gendered structures are reproduced (see paragraph 4.1.1. Gender, Labor and Organization). The concepts mentioned in the paragraphs 4.1.2. and 4.1.3. describes gender in relation to nature and environment. The concepts contribute with theories on how gendered subject positions and the creation of gendered identities are produced in relation to people's view on, and social construction of, nature.

### 3.1. Feminist Standpoint Theory

Using feminist standpoint theory in this thesis is considered to be a fruitful tool to work with in combination with the agroecological framework. There is a harmonious consistency between the agroecological concept of acknowledging traditional farmers' knowledge and the standpoint theory's keystone of giving the voice to oppressed groups in order to produce (situated) knowledge built on their worldview and experience (Harding, 2004). Agroecological knowledge and practice should be shared among farmers rather than imposed from external actors in a vertical top-down approach (Gliessman, 2015). Using this theory brings more transparency and knowledge into any research and projects with people, and provides better understanding of both oppressed groups and oppressors' viewpoint (Harding, 2004). How and by whom knowledge is produced shapes the definition and solution of problems. Thus, subjectivity is easily affecting science and decision-makers.

Standpoint theory got introduced to the field of research in the 1970's as a method especially suited for feminist critical research " ... as a way of empowering oppressed groups, of valuing their experiences ... as a philosophy of both natural and social sciences, an epistemology, a methodology ... and a political strategy." (Harding, 2004:2). In feminist standpoint theory, one significant claim emphasizes the interconnection between produced knowledge and power relations which are often grounded in an androcentric, white-supremacist culture with economically advantaged and heteronormative understandings. This relation, pointing at situated knowledge and standpoint epistemology, means that conceptual frameworks and people's positions in society must be recognized and understood in order to produce knowledge and understand the given information. Valuable and trustworthy information about oppressed groups can thus be found only when the oppressed ones are allowed to express their

consciousness and experiences, and researchers start from these people's social position. Feminist standpoint theory therefore stresses women's perspective on sexism, as well as their interests in general, as the most privileged one to be highlighted and represented in scientific fields (Harding, 2004). Because, the fundamental idea and concept of modern science to be value-free and rational can never be achieved as long as its body of knowledge is based on dominating perspectives and particularly provided by one homogenous group of people (white, bourgeois men) (Shiva, 1988). Science needs to be aiming at including knowledge from all people. Also, position the actual knowers of a certain issue as the primary source of knowledge and value the extracted information as a reflection of peoples' social position as the knowledge being situated. This is also why it is of high relevancy to emphasize the agroecological element of co-creation of knowledge (as well as human and social value) through letting local and traditional farmer's knowledge lead the way of agroecological practice and science, as well as asking female farmers about gendered farming practices. Following, concepts and theories on how to recognize and approach issues of gender within research are explained. First, as mentioned, gender in relation to work and organizations is described, followed by gender in relation to nature.

### 3.1.1. Gender, Labor and Organization

Due to gendered division of labor and gendered distribution of wages and power, for instance, organizations should be studied from a feminist perspective regarding existing body of research (Acker, 1990). Acker (2006) underlines the importance of including additional categories when studying and discussing gender inequalities within organizations, such as the interconnections of race and class. As an entity for organizing people, organizations also constitute a platform where inequality between groups of people are created and reproduced. The oppressions are not shaped separately, but are rather very much linked to each other. Reminiscent of the fundamental idea of systems thinking to have an intersectional perspective on every matter. Studying inequalities and power relations within organizations means to partly look at how power and influence in decision-making is divided between participants (Acker, 2006). It is then fruitful to put it in a societal context and be aware of the changeable inequalities' variations considering both time and space. Disparities and oppressions vary in consistency with geographical, political, cultural and historical orientation. Gendered norms, as well as racism

and classism (among other discriminations<sup>2</sup>) in society are often reflected in various forms of organizations within the society.

Larger organizations are often manifesting the hierarchical power relations more than smaller ones, but whether organizations have a horizontal or vertical structure of power-sharing improves or impairs women's empowerment and influence respectively (Acker, 2006). However, the problem of gender inequalities often persists even when men and women possess the same high-status positions due to co-worker's mentality framed by gendered norms and expectations. Women exercising power over men or performing work in the same way as their male counterparts are often treated differently and potentially met with resistance from men because they "violate conventions of relative subordination to men" (Acker, 2006:447). Acker (2006) has contributed with fruitful insights, from an intersectional perspective, on how inequality regimes are created, including both division of labor and power relations. She defines inequality regimes as "loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations" (Acker, 2006:443). According to Acker (1990:146), inequality in organizations is reproduced through the following, separated but interconnected, processes:

- Structures
- Symbols, norms and ideals
- Interaction
- Creation of identity

The process of structures refers to how things are divided between people (gender, but also race and class) and includes labor, acceptance of how one can behave etc. The second point involves the process in which gendered symbols and norms are created. This can be done through the way people use the language, the way people of dress or through media. One example can be different dress codes depending on the status of your job, or the image of an occupation is presented through advertising. Interaction refers to how individuals interact and how they adapt a certain behavior depending on whether it is a woman or a man talking to each other. The last, fourth point, can in a way be explained as a result of the other processes. When gender is created through the other ones, individuals create their own identity based on space that these processes provide. The identity of individuals then affect how they choose to live their lives (Acker, 1990).

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<sup>2</sup> Racism, classism and sexism are mentioned by Acker (2006) to be the most expressed oppressions within organizations. Yet, they are intersections of several other forms of discrimination (Carbado *et al.*, 2013).

Based on more traditional work organizations, Acker (2006) emphasizes the significance of expectations on groups of people within organizations: e.g. who an employee should be. Many times, this image of the “suitable employee” is very narrow and the ascribed attributes that follows are not applicable to the majority of people demanding a job. Women, black people, non-black people of color, people with other responsibilities or interests apart from their, preferably, full time job, are rarely included in this picture. So, already in the recruitment process, and the produced preunderstanding of the organizations, people are discriminated and inequality is created. Preferences during processes of recruitment and hiring often reflect the existing employees – the dominant group. Also, because some organizations actively are looking for women, and sometimes especially women of color, who employers believe will comply with worse working conditions due to already existing racism (as if they have no better choice), or provide something other than men to the organization (e.g. care- or relational labor). It is also within these organizations where the wage gap is clear (another parameter of inequality reproduction). The requirements of work seem to be more strictly followed the lower the level of the job in question. When mainly fulltime jobs are available, women are automatically excluded since they often are the ones taking more responsibility at home and with the children. Additionally, part-time jobs rarely include the same insurance or preferential employment contracts as full-time jobs and the wage tend to be lower (ibid).

Thus, gendering is not only a phenomenon among individuals. It penetrates every structure in society, among people as well as within institutions, collectively and individually (Brush, 2003). Here is where the aspect of responsible governance takes place as well, since it is also very much affected by, and affects, structures of gender. Brush (2003:12) underline that: “states and social policies are gendered. That is, states and social policies reproduce, and are inflected with, masculinity and femininity as different and unequal markers of power”. Bacchi (2017) highlights the importance of understanding gender as a continuous process, as a verb; gendering, that both produce and reproduce gendered structures in society. Drawing upon policy processes, Bacchi describes how policies, when being developed and analyzed, also can create and reproduce inequality in terms of being racializing, heteronorming, classing etc. Depending on how policies are developed, they can contribute to the inequality of already oppressed groups and must therefore be studied and developed responsibly in order to avoid that reproduction of oppression. Therefore, policies is both constituted of and constitute specific realities that shape the terms under which individuals are living and thus their actual lives as well as the relation between these people (Bacchi, 2017).

### 3.1.2. Gender, Nature and Ecology

It is not solely agroecology within the fields of agriculture that connects well with feminist perspectives and feminist research. As stated within the theory of ecofeminism (as well as by researchers and organizations), the ecological, and environmental, movement in general with its' focus on everybody's right to food security, a healthy life and a life without environmental degradation is very much a women's movement (Mies & Shiva, 2004). This, since failure in food systems and food security, pollution and ecological disasters has a worse impact on women's lives than on men's regardless of race, ethnicity, culture or class. Still, these backgrounds pose and cause differences between the group of women (see Carbado et al., 2013). Women of different race and class are affected different from each other by environmental issues as well as other problems of oppression or discrimination. Feminist ecology researchers, have previously addressed the connection between patriarchal and capitalistic domination worldwide and the increased environmental degradation that to a greater extent impairs the situation for many women (Mies & Shiva, 2004). Within many feminist theories, the gendered roles of men and women in their connection with nature are socially constructed due to androcentric orders (Stephens, 2013). Many theories also have other things in common, but ecofeminism is more about men and women's' biological differences, while ecological feminism and feminist political ecology see the differences as a result of how people live and because of the patriarchal structure of society (Nightingale, 2006). Together with e.g. Harding (2004) and Shiva (1988), Nightingale criticizes the male domination within the scientific world and the thereby limited and subjective knowledge it contributes with, thus she stresses the importance of intersectionality within science and research. Thus, the theory of feminist political ecology is emphasized due to its similarities with the feminist standpoint theory but more directly connected with ecology. The theory, as she describes, points out the key concepts of both gendered knowledge, gendered environmental rights and responsibilities; and gendered activism (Nightingale 2006:168). Social inequality is a consequence of environmental issues and vice versa. So, when environmental or agrarian projects are about to be planned, gender cannot be separated from the issues owing to its involvement in the very problem.

The gender-sensitive approach of this thesis is thus framed by the feminist standpoint theory and feminist political ecology, and aims at emphasizing women's lived experiences by letting their narratives bring understanding to the research questions contextualized in the male dominance of agriculture. Feminist researchers highlight the addressed problems of both natural and social science as being contextualized by capitalist and patriarchal perspectives (Rose,

1983). Thus, feminist research aims at countering that domination. Consequently, among the various quantitative studies on female farmers participation in the Swedish agriculture, it also emerges, from a feminist perspective a need of using supplementary tools for conducting a more feminist qualitative research together with, and for, women (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). The gender-sensitive approach also includes certain ways of how to make interviews correctly, regarding the analyzing and understanding of women's narratives of their lived experiences (Devault, 1990).

### 3.1.3. Social Construction of Nature and Gender

As previous paragraphs show, men and women are often ascribed different subject positions based on male and female coded skills and personalities. Women are often put in relation to the nature's ability to give life and are therefore considered to have a closer relationship with nature. The social construction of gender and gendered identities do not only affect the structure and organization of different industries such as agriculture. It also affects people's perception of, and approach to, nature in general, and vice versa. This is additionally one example on how gender is reproduced, in relation with nature and environment. Environmental degradation is caused by, and is causing, gender inequality through its direct effects of how nature is perceived and produced by people (Nightingale, 2006). Some theorists (e.g. Castree & Braun, 2005) argue that people have socially constructed nature, and one of the standpoints here is that our knowledge about nature is partial due to the limited group of knowledge producers which is relatable to the key principles of feminist standpoint theory (see chapter 4). Natural science should therefore be interdisciplinary and conducted in combination with other sciences (Castree & Braun, 2005; Arora-Jonsson, 2014) because our perception of gender and nature are simultaneously socially constructed and affected by one another (Nightingale, 2006). Castree and Braun (2005) are two of the theorists conceptualizing "social nature" and argues that social structures in society have created our approach to nature and how it should be used by people (Castree & Braun, 2005). Humans have for a long time created nature so that it will suit us and our way of living, instead of the other way around. Therefore, another argument is that "the social and natural are seen to intertwine in ways that make their separation – in either thought or practice – impossible" (Castree & Braun, 2005:3). This theoretical concept can be applied when analyzing the development of agriculture including machinery, technology and in terms of agrochemicals and GMO, but also regarding deforestation, for example. In relation to the forest, Arora-Jonsson (2014) gives an example of subject positions regarding forestry in which

sector timber used to be the primary focus, and still is to a big extent. With such a specific and dominated subject, there is a limited space for other values to be included. This is a consequence of how the forest is perceived by people whose focus is on economic profit, and thus, they operate by putting an economic price on the nature which aims at being beneficial for people, not for the nature. Applying this theory on agriculture, can be done by observing the male subjects of the sector. For example, the focus on mechanization in relation with masculinization (see, for example: Brandth, 1995) explains how people see agriculture and that the focus lies in producing food for profit gain rather than taking care of the earth as it actually provide everything we need for a living. Heavy machines create a focus on physical strength and certain technological skills that generally is male coded. These attributes are not only male coded in advertising as described by Brandth (1995), but in our minds and perceptions of who the actual farmer is. Thus, the culture within agriculture, and the way of how farming is done, is dependent on how it is seen by people. People's perception also creates and structures social relations intertwined with the social constructions of gender that can be found also outside the world of farming. The modern agriculture and its trends affect, and is caused by, our view on nature as something that exists for our sake. This perception is especially reflected in conventional agriculture with its extractive approach. In contrast, the caring and nurturing of the earth, which is more represented within organic farming where heavy machines is less prioritized and sometimes despised, is much more female coded and not as highly valued. The view on nature and the agricultural approach simultaneously shape gendering practices and processes as it creates subject positions. So, the theoretical concept of nature as socially constructed is also applicable within agriculture and very much connected with gender. Nature creates subject positions and structures social relations depending on how the nature is understood (Nightingale, 2006).

### 3.2. Systems Thinking and Agroecology

Systems thinking refers to the way of how to involve several interrelated elements to get a holistic view of a certain matter and avoiding the risk of separate it from its context and thereby lose important interacting parts (Arnold & Wade, 2015). It emphasizes the importance of critical thinking by analyzing issues in the light of others while striving for a better understanding of an issues' complexity. Thus, it is fruitful to use in this study due to the complex topic and its many interactions. In systems thinking, emphasizing the interaction of different entities and including several aspects of one, is as important as separating the entities

from each other simultaneously when focusing on a certain problem (Bell & Bland, 2009). Conducting systems thinking has been very important for the agricultural science in general. Further, using it as an approach for research is essential especially for interdisciplinary science, within which field agroecology is positioned (Francis et al., 2003). Within the frames of agroecological practice and learning, systems thinking means to look at how biological and social parts of a food system is having an impact on each other (Francis et al., 2012).

Agroecology, as mentioned, is the overall framework of this thesis that influences both the subject, the method as well as the analysis (For further information on the connection between agroecology and gender, see Chapter 1). Regarding the theoretical framework guiding the very result, analysis and discussion, some specific aspects of the agroecology aspect are worth mentioning further in order to understand its meaning. The focus is very much on the sustainability aspect of farming systems, and when analysing or discussing this, there are several factors to include as indicators for sustainability (Gliessman, 2015). Within agroecology, these indicators are divided in ecological and socioeconomic parameters. These include the following: characteristics of the soil resource; hydrogeological factors; biotic factors; ecosystem-level characteristics; ecological economics (farm profitability) and; the social and cultural environment. All of these parameters, in turn, include several sub-parameters. As being expressed by Gliessman himself: “the final step in agroecological research is to understand ecological sustainability in the context of social and economic systems” (Gliessman, 2015:294). Agroecology in general, have been taken into consideration first and foremost while interviewing in order to be guided and not forget the very framework of the study, as well as to get a proper insight to the farmers organizations and farming systems. Additional guidelines were also used as a framework when interviewing. These are the key elements formulated by FAO, formulated as following:

<b>Key Elements of Agroecology</b>	
<b>Efficiency</b>	To preserve and maintain natural resources and to use less off-farm inputs.
<b>Balance</b>	To preserve and maintain self-regulations of ecosystems
<b>Diversity</b>	To preserve and maintain biodiversity
<b>Co-creation of knowledge</b>	To preserve and maintain local and traditional knowledge in combination with innovation
<b>Recycling</b>	To preserve and maintain natural resources as renewable
<b>Synergies</b>	To preserve and maintain ecosystem services by combining crops and livestock.

<b>Human and social value</b>	To recognize and emphasize everyone's contribution, participation and rights within food systems
<b>Circular economy</b>	To preserve and maintain local and fair economies
<b>Culture and food traditions</b>	To preserve and maintain food security and nutritious food
<b>Land and natural resources governance</b>	To preserve and maintain small-scale farmers rights also at community level

Table 1: The 10 elements of agroecology according to FAO (FAO, 2018).

## 4. Result

In this chapter the result of the interviews is presented. Each part presents one theme and quotations are frequently used in order to be transparent, since open interpretations are better offered when the narratives are allowed to speak for themselves to a bigger extent than if their words would be reformulated. It is of importance to underline the very differences between the farmers. What they say is presented both as a collected sample of data and individually since they all have different backgrounds affecting their stories and experiences. Therefore, the presentation of the material, as well the analysis in the next chapter, aims at showing a balance between the farmers' differences and similarities. This chapter is thus divided in themes based on key concepts from the theoretical framework, which in turn are divided into sub-themes based on emerging themes that are common denominators among the majority of the farmers. Within each presentation of the themes, the farmers' individual narratives are presented and described to show variety. So, what all of these farmers for certain have in common is precisely the criteria for the interview, namely that they are women, owning organic farms, located in Scania. Thus, they share the experience of being a woman and a farmer, running organic farming businesses in Scania, but still they have different financial background, educational background, different civil status, different types of farming, different age (33-65) etc. Their similarities and differences affect their narratives and are therefore important and interesting when analysing the data. The farmer's motivation and reason to become organic farm owners, as well as their view of nature and experience of gendering will be presented and related to previous research when relevant. The combination of inductive and deductive coding together with the theoretical framework forms the basis of the analysis. The processes described by Acker (1990), and that are mentioned in the theoretical framework, are used in the analysis as tools to understand the material from the interviews. Therefore, the analysis is divided based on those processes, even though the material is diverse and includes both a great variety as well as commonalities.

## 4.1. Creation of Identity: A Lifestyle Choice

### 4.1.1. Self-sufficiency and independence

It appears from the thematic analysis of the interviews one specific consensus among the farmers. That is the incredibly strong driving force that permeates every narrative and forms the most emerging theme: A Lifestyle Choice. The farmers have all different stories and experiences but are in a clear consonance when it comes to their conviction and motivation of realizing their dreams. Some visions appeared to be stronger than others, but it is still a general outcome. Asking the question of what their drive is, or *not* asking the question, didn't make much of a difference. The majority of the farmers themselves talked about their ambition, motivation and life as a farmer with strong enthusiasm.

Farmer 3 runs a permacultural garden in southwest of Scania and is largely self-sufficient. She has been working and living on farms for several years around Europe before she settled down on her own. It was from the travelling and interaction with other people on farms that inspired her and changed her view point on how she wanted to live her life. From the very first day on her own farm she started to develop and realize her vision, which includes permaculture, ecological construction, WWOOFing (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) etc. She emphasizes the importance of working the land, always with communal context (kollektivt sammanhang) in mind and focus:

Once a farmer, always a farmer. It is a lifestyle choice for me. I cannot imagine any other way. To me, it's a lifestyle choice I made twenty years ago which led us to where we are today. So that's the foundation, the important thing, in the entirety.

Farmer 5 also strives to become self-sufficient as much as possible. She has both vegetable farming, lamb production and milk production from a few cows. Everything is on a small-scale level that she manages by her own (with some help from her partner), for herself and her family. What the family doesn't need, the surplus, goes for sale. For her, farming is not only about the methods or practices, rather about what it adds to her life:

It is a choice of life that you make. It is not just that you run the company ecologically, but it's a life choice that permeates everything you do. And so, it is, *absolutely*, for us. We are living in this.

#### 4.1.2. The value of “being free”

On the question of what the biggest motivation is, Farmer 4 said that it is the way of living that attracts her the most. By that she meant both being at home, working outdoors, working with animals and being able to give her children the best childhood she could imagine. During her interview it was very clear how engaged she was with the farm and why she was doing it organically as well as her ambition of being self-sufficient. She mentioned the importance of being able to decide how she wanted to work without anyone interfering. This was also brought up by Farmer 1 who emphasized the value of “being free” but in contrast to the others she does not see the organic part as a conception of life even though it affects her in some decisions. It was more important for the business than for her private life. This, similar to Farmer 6 who were precisely as engaged as the other ones in the business but not exactly as much regarding her lifestyle.

Farmer 2 express her motivation slightly different from previous quotations. She says that she has her farm because of interest, that she finds it amusing to sow and see it grow. She then continues to describe how tough it can be from time to time which is a recurring topic throughout the interview. Her attitude differed from the other ones’ and were very much more modest. Even though her conviction didn’t seem to be as strong as the ones of the others at first, it appeared that she had at least as much thoughts and ideas about how a potential development of the farm could have been and what she could have done if she had the right means. Also, how things would have been different if she was younger or had more support: “If one had felt that the other half could have helped out more, then... then you might would have been able to put more effort on it...”. These things, she mentioned more diffident than when she talked about practical work for instance. Even so, she goes on with it because she wants to which also is a strength, maybe even more worth admiring due to her difficulties.

## 4.2. Structures: The Need of Complementary Activities

### 4.2.1. Low Profitability

This theme emphasises the farmers’ thoughts about complementary activities regarding economic sustainability. The theme automatically leads to the matter of responsible governance regarding organic small-scale farmers in the Swedish context. Farmer 2 was most concerned about the financial situation:

Well... this do not pay for itself. It's probably similar to many other farms that you cannot take out salary. Perhaps the day you stop working. And we do not live in abundance, we do not go somewhere on vacation. We have never done that either, and we might feel that we don't need to, but of course we would like to get a little more money out of it. From the job that you put down so to speak.

She also returns several times to the question about money and the financial situation in her business, as when she mentions certain crops that generates a better income than others or when she talks about hiring someone seasonally. She tells about her thoughts of having one employee and then maybe expand the business, but that it is a matter of being able to afford it which she believes she isn't. She also says that:

So, if I would focus only on what I earn, I wouldn't do this. Because it is nothing that generates anything [...] It is not proportional. One could sit here at home instead enjoying the summer evenings. No, I really do not know why I'm doing it, if you're going to look at it frankly.

In contrast to her thoughts about money, Farmer 7 has another view on the financial situation. Even though their situations are quite similar, and even though Farmer 7 also experience some short-comings in the economy, her focus is elsewhere:

I do not complain for a second, but I can just say that if I had not been retired and lived on my pension I would not have managed it. [...] the reality is a whole different one. And that's what I want too. [...] then, if I want to win on this, then suddenly this will happen, that you need to change the purpose for wanting money. And that, we can forget! Okay? It is *never* the money that governs. And it's not the money that gets to control this farm. No.

Farmer 3 also admits that her farm doesn't generate any large profit but with an attitude more similar with the one of Farmer 7:

For me it is a gold mine that I literally have 900 m to the sea. So, "now I'm on vacation". [...] I don't go on holiday otherwise, but we can do it daily. My kids have always been able to go to the beach.

There are of course different backgrounds explaining the differences in the quotations from Farmer 2 and Farmer 7. The quotations show how one's vision can overcome difficulties such as financial problem, and how one chooses to see the question about money in a business as less relevant depending on how you choose to live your life. The majority of the farmers did not seem to live in abundance, since they talked more about financial obstacles rather than how

great their revenue was. However, it is important to note that they talked about this in different ways and with different attitudes depending on their individual perspectives. Farmer 4 answered as following on the question about whether their workload is considered to be proportional with all that it generates:

It depends on how you see it. If you see it in money, then 'no'. But it's not the money I'm looking for. I want to live like this. I want to be outdoors. I want to have my animals. I want to have my children nearby. I do not want to leave them six in the morning and pick them up at six in the evening. I want to be at home as much as possible and take care of what I have. Cook food from scratch. It's a lot, much more worth than the money.

Farmer 5 says as a respond:

I think similar. It's also like that, I get an idea and I'll thrive for it. If I want something I'll do that. It may take longer time, and I have to do more physical work myself, but I'll do it. As long as I can feel my value base and thought of that I want to be home and realize some dreams, that's the way you got to take.

Farmer 4 also says that the thought of organic production as less profitable is what scares conventional farmers to convert: "because I will not conceal the fact that... there is no big profit in it". Farmer 5 interjects and say that as a small-scale farmer you need several "legs to stand on" in order to get by and that this is also the reason why one needs to expand slowly as well as having the courage to do so.

In line with the above, Farmer 3 stresses the need of complementary activities and explains one of her ways of handling the financial situation:

... the vegetables themselves do not give a proper income. Like, people are not prepared to pay today so that someone are able to live on it. And especially not in the microscale that I have. But on the other hand, people are prepared to pay for experiences today. So, then I thought there was more in being able to open the farm for this experience.

Her attitude towards the existing challenges is very positive, even though she is very aware of the problems that exists. Still, she chooses to be hopeful and see the possibilities with what she does. She answers as following on the question of whether she experience any obstacles with her business:

No, not really. Because for me it has been a choice. It is an active choice. [...] I feel more that I'm a person with rather long patience. I think I'm just waiting for things to be right in time. I still have my fundamental vision of what I want to do, and I'm not there yet. And I think it is because of the consequences my personal life has been through, which have made me unable to take anything for granted. There are so many parameters that need to function. And that is, so to say, the disadvantage of this small-scale. Small-scale and connected with my private life. That the one affects the other very much. That's the truth. So, when it's hard times, hard years within the family, it's evident in the cultivation. Because I mean, if you work at a farm, it's all connected. The work and life... you are always at work.

In contrast to many of the farmers, Farmer 1 expressed that she finds it balanced, the workload spent on the business with its generated revenue. She says that it is proportional but that it is extremely intensive during season and when they feel that they have the economy, they will also have the possibility to hire someone to facilitate the workload. Also, that it is ok to "waste" a little to get a better everyday life. Although, as the other farmers say, Farmer 1 also explains the "different legs to stand on" such as the cultivation in combination with accommodations, farm shop, sale to restaurants etc.

#### 4.2.2. Reliance on an inadequate certification

The majority of the farmers say that society is more suitable, and built up, for bigger businesses that can afford a bigger investment from the very start. That's why it is important to go step by step and be patient. Farmer 3 doesn't express any specific concern regarding the certification but she does say that her way of managing her farm through permacultural methods is not in accordance with the certificate's regulations. The certification body is, according to her, not designed for her type of farming due to the requirements of having a certain area for one certain crop etc.

Farmer 4 was lucky by having the prerequisites to use buildings, milking machines and some land from her parents when she initiated her business. Farmer 5 was able to renovate a smaller farm in order to sell it with profit to buy a new one. They both say that they've built up their farms slowly step by step. Otherwise it would be very challenging. In spite of some difficulties with being small and starting a business, they stress the advantages of being small as it includes another way of thinking and seeing opportunities in what one does. For example, by letting it grow successively, taking over and repairing old machines, helping each other etc. and to do all this despite the time and work it requires as well as despite what other people might think. Farmer 2 also had the prerequisites of using machines that belongs to the husband's farm as well as manure from his animals. This way of starting small and grow slowly is common among

all farmers except one who took over an existing farm from her parents-in-law. Farmer 1, who is less concerned over the financial situation also says that they have built their business successively and grown slowly.

They also got the question of why they think people choose their products, or why not. Farmer 1 is more or less convinced that the greatest value of her products is that they are local and therefore fresh. She says that some customers of course want to buy it because of the certification but that the majority probably cares more about the quality regarding the taste and freshly harvested products.

Farmer 4 says:

Both the local and the organic. Both. I don't think that people would have bought the milk if it was conventional. Absolutely not. I don't think so. After all, the breed has a certain meaning as well. That it is a polled mountain cattle (Fjällko). So, I think it is both the organic, and that it is close. I don't think that the organic part plays an important role if it's from far away.

Farmer 5 interjects:

I see on our share boxes that you get a relationship with the ones you sell to. It becomes, like, they know exactly. We also invite people to the farm and one comes home to us and see where it grows. [...] and they can spread it to others, if they are satisfied. And my thought was, I had hoped from the beginning that KRAV would not be needed. That one would only be transparent, that you would actually grow "beyond organic". To be so transparent that you show exactly what you use, the way you cultivate. And that would be enough. That as a small business doesn't have to... but it does not look like that today. It's not enough. Certification is important to some extent.

Farmer 4 and 5 discussed their view on certification and its pros and cons. They talked about people selling products as organic but without a certification and how this receives as "provocative" among these two farmers. Also, that selling products without a certification is a part of what leads to peoples' scepticism about organically produced food. Farmer 5 says that many people have a preconception about organic as something unregulated and unserious which exacerbates due to the sale of non-certified products. She experiences non-certified producers' sales as unfair towards the many farmers that actually follow strict regulations and requirements to be taken seriously. Farmer 4 agrees and refers to the transparency within certification bodies which is built on controls. Apart from this, they both agree on the administrative work as a bit demanding due to a lot of paperwork that needs to be done in order to document traceability. They don't experience the different regulations as challenging since

they probably would manage their farm similarly even without a certification. According to farmer 4 and 5 it is only the paperwork that sometimes feel like somewhat demanding.

In line with this, Farmer 2 expresses disappointment on how the situation looks for small-scale farmers regarding certificates and controls. She is of the opinion that certification bodies are more suitable for bigger businesses with larger fields specialized on one or a few crops. She was also tired of the amount of documentation that, according to her, was very zealous but mandatory if one would receive subsidies. Especially when she was asked to document every time she was weeding, which she does daily on different occasions when needed. She says that it would have been easier if she had bigger areas that were managed mechanically. For her, it was also difficult to document her harvest in advance due to the small fields. This, she meant was more suited and designed for bigger farms.

Even though not all of the farmers expressed that they experience any obstacle with the certification body, more than half of them were not satisfied with some parts of it. Also, the certification is necessary for many of these small-scale farmers due to some people's frequently expressed scepticism with organic products. Many people trust the farmer's cultivation methods, while some focus mainly on the certification symbol. Nevertheless, it is of importance to note the experienced dependency of being certified even though it is not always facilitating the actual production of the certified products.

### 4.3. Interaction: “Women are more socially active, men ‘just do’”

This theme especially embraces the farmers perspectives and understanding of gender and gendering processes within farming. It also includes how it may affect them.

For some of the farmers, it is very clear that gendering is present and that there are clear perceptions on what's male or female, and expectations thereafter. The male domination is obvious for many of the farmers. Still, some of them don't see a gendered nature of farming to a very big extent and the impression is that that the majority have not reflected very much on gendering or expectations of men and women, but their narratives still witness about structures relatable with the theoretical framework.

Among those who do experience gendering, the impact appears to differ. One farmer, Farmer 7, does not consider gendered codes and norms as socially constructed. She rather emphasizes the importance of male and female values to be maintained under the right circumstances. The others are more in agreement with the thought of gendered norms as something that causes

prejudices and discrimination which seem to either provoke or spur the farmers. Although, regardless of whether the farmers experience gendering, or not, the content of all interviews is that all except one show such an incredibly strong standpoint that they don't suffer from any possible negative consequences that could be caused due to an unequal sector. Even if they themselves may witness gendering or even discrimination they don't allow themselves to be affected negatively or to, by any means, doubt themselves in what they do.

As will be mentioned further, it appears that many of the farmers after all do have a certain picture of male and female coded fields within the frames of agriculture and farming, consciously or not. Some of them also has a clear picture of how men and women differ from each other in their work on farms but with different explanations behind it. The content of this theme is however that there are gendered notions and skills that can be found in every case.

#### 4.3.1. Division of Skills

On the question whether there are specific expectations on female farmers, Farmer 1 says that there is none. That since she is the one selling the products in the shop and talking more to the customers, she has become the person that people connects with the brand. She says that "Now, it is *me* who is [brand name]". On the same question, Farmer 3 says:

Expectations, no... in this way I'm a relatively young generation, there are quite many women of my age who can drive a tractor as well as men... I see, as a general difference, that there are more women who are more active socially and marketingly, and more men who 'just do'.

This quotation and statement are nothing rare or outstanding while looking on what other farmers say. She also continues:

It wouldn't surprise me that if you did a small separate study and saw that behind every successful company, there is often a strong woman who has a complete view of it. [...] I had a woman taking a course for me a few years ago and she came to me because she wanted to learn about small-scale vegetable cultivation. And then, she was married to a big farmer who had a huge farm. She herself had some sheep. But I saw that among them two, she was the one who had control, while of course he had three tractors... but I see it the other way around, that women are as capable as men, and more than men. [...] she is the spider in the web and has a great deal of control.

Farmer 3 mentions two other women as examples of this statement. She also says, coherent with the opinion of Farmer 7 (see below), that these women are examples of how particularly women can "take something very small and turn it into something quite big - by understanding

the versatility”. Similar with Farmer 7, Farmer 3 says that women are the ones having that ability and that is why they do that job and that “I find it hard to believe that women would accept not having an equal status”.

Farmer 7’s statements and thoughts are similar to the ones of Farmer 3 but are even more coherent with the described perspective of ecofeminism (not expressed by her). She was one of the farmers that talked about gendered codes and norms as a strength. Without including oppression or privilege in the discussion, these women saw female coded norms, behaviour and characteristics as a power among females. Farmer 7 had her very own explanation on female and male values:

When the female values come in, it’s about protecting nature, taking care of the family. You want to be in a social context. You want small-scale instead of large scale. One wants mobility instead of static. All this is included in that. But you’ve abandoned that. The woman’s role is... she has served the man instead. In the fifties she was at home as a housewife, so he went out. She has pushed him with lots of energy so that he could build up this society. Instead of taking care of her own values and realizing them. [...] the woman thinks holistic, in her perspective. If she does not go into the male mind. She is process-oriented, and the man is goal-oriented.

Farmer 7 also initiates the interview by saying that she is very grateful to be a woman, due to female features, which she sees as natural originating from biology and through our genes. She also says that being a woman, especially in other parts of Europe outside Scandinavia, have favoured her as a person. Her experience was of the kind that she, as a woman and academician is very respected and well-regarded in other countries. Her knowledge is worthy of attention and she was given the chance to implement what she wanted. In contrast, it is different in Sweden where especially older women are not at all treated the same way. She claims that she wouldn’t have as good possibilities outside of Sweden if she was a man. In the Swedish context, she says that one, preferably, should not be either a woman, a pioneer, a visionary, an elderly or retired. That the Swedish society is characterized by production and profit gain, monocultures, machines and industrialization. All this, she means, has led us to a society where men and women are confused and don’t know their roles nor the value of male and female features. Farmer 3 is of a different experience when she is being asked the questions of how she experiences people’s response to her as a female farmer. She says that it is only positive response in general, and that she finds strength in the kind words that she receives.

### 4.3.2. Division of Labor

In cases where the farmers run the business together with their husbands, or where the partners are more or less involved with the farm, it emerges a pattern that the men more often and more preferably use a tractor. This can be represented by especially one interview where Farmer 2 says that "... and he is not that keen of picking vegetables or doing manual weeding. It has to be done with a tractor". She manages her farm without big machines and mainly manually, but she mentions that her partner might have helped her more if it would be tasks done with tractors. She is also the only one expressing a desire of more support from her partner and also more doubt when it comes to the potential possibilities of developing her farm:

But then I don't know if it's typically female that you do not dare to invest more. Firstly, I feel that I may be a bit old to do something bigger and really go for it. Secondly, it is difficult. If one had felt that the other half could have helped out more, then... then you might have been able to put more effort on it. But it doesn't work out with his job.

In the same interview, gendered norms also appeared to be present outside the specific work on-farm. The interviewees got the question of how they combine farm work with household activities, based on the notion of farm owner as an occupation integrated with one's private life since it very much affects and becomes one's lifestyle. Farmer 2 answers, on that question, as following:

Now, here are not many children at home right now, but it was a little like that... that you did not get home and then the food wasn't ready on time. Sometimes you had to finish there, drive home to cook, and then drive over there again to do the weeding and get done.

This, together with the citation above gives the impression of her being the one responsible for household work, at least the cooking part, and together with other parts from the interview show the presence of gendered norms.

Farmer 3 answers as following when she got the same question:

... someone else who would answer this would probably say "But N.N., you have done *everything*". Simply. So, the answer to the question of whether it is possible to separate work and home, I say "no!" because if it is *one* person who does everything, and that person is you, then you see it all...

In another part of the interview she says:

From the beginning, there was a “we”, but today, and the last five years, it is only *me* managing the farming business and the cultivation. It is *me* who is the farmer. [...] *I* have had the responsibility, and it is *me* who has the responsibility. For everything.

Apart from these answers, the farmers appear to experience the combination of household work and farm work as quite satisfying.

In two other interviews, the farmers (1 and 6) strongly emphasized the meaningful and effective cooperation with their partners (farmer 6 talks about her husband as her soulmate), and it appeared that they did not see gendered norms as a problem. Rather, that their cooperation and divided activities contributed to a pleasant managing of the farm. What also emerged, which is referable with Farmer 2’s telling, was that their partners were usually the ones driving the bigger machines. This is being mentioned, not to put an individual action in a bad light, but to observe it as a part of the gendered pattern that exists and that matches accordingly with previous research (see Trauger (2004) and Wells & Gradwell (2001)). Farmer 1 also mentions that she decides what is to be ordered, cultivated and how much, while her partner is the one doing the more “large-scale, practical stuff” like weeding with tractor. He is also the one doing the accounts. The reason seemed to be that he knew how to drive it from the beginning. Still, these farmers (especially 1 and 6) say that they could do that job as well, if they’d like to and if they would prioritize it more than other tasks. The majority of the farmers still manage their farms mainly manually without machines.

### 4.3.3. Gendered Expectations

Farmer 4 is one of the farmers who runs the farm by herself and does both manual and mechanic work. She says, when being asked if she personally has experienced certain expectations on women within farming, that:

Absolutely. Especially when you are in a production, that if I would be a man doing that job, it would not have been any big deal. But if I’m a woman then ‘oh, can you really do that?’, or ‘oh, now you have been here for a long time’, ‘now you must be tired’. It is so much like that. And also, like ‘don’t you get dirty?’, ‘little friend’... [...] like what the hell do you say? What do you mean? Would it be easier for my brother to do that? ‘well, you say that guys have bigger muscles than girls. Yes, but I use mine *every* day. I think we can do it as easy as they can. That provokes me very much and has always done. My dad said, for example, that girls do not spit. Things like that. Why should it be okay for a guy? Why can’t I

as a girl be in the military? Or why can't I as a girl do farming? Why should it be harder for a girl to run a farming business? Really, what's the difference?"

But whether these farmers experience gendering or not, they seem to be too dedicated and strong to even care. Farmer 5 says, as a respond to Farmer 4:

I might have been lucky. I have probably not encountered it like that. I don't know if I'm just... I don't even consider the thought of them being allowed to think like that. So, I just... move on.

Farmer 6 first said, on the same topic, that she doesn't experience certain expectations on men and women within farming. That she feels that she has been seen for her knowledge and skills rather than judged by her sex. Also, that she never has experienced anything related to the movement #metoo<sup>3</sup>:

Requirements, or expectations. Hm... no, I don't know. We can take this with "metoo" and this that have been discussed. I have never, never, *never* experienced anything. And why? I don't know. Neither as young, as employed or as elected in any organisation. But then, I have understood that there have been a lot of other things...

Now, the question was not about harassments or the hashtag specifically, it was her own connection to it. This answer was thus followed by a more direct question of whether she had never experienced anyone reacting on that she as a woman was working the way she does, with agriculture. Then, the answer was that it was rather something that spurred her. When people looked surprisingly at her passing by in the tractor, she got more motivated. But still, she says that the comments are few and that she reacts the same way when she sees a girl in a truck for example: "I think that's awesome. But it is still a bit like that, that it shall be machinery and tractors and trucks, it should be a male. It's a male world. Largely speaking".

The farmers didn't all experience a gendered nature in the same way, but many of them had their own thoughts about women and men in farming. Farmer 6 says that:

Overall, I think there are more women who choose organic before men. And the younger generation before men. Because there were many elderly gentlemen, a generation above us, that... God, what kind

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<sup>3</sup> A campaign initiated by Tarana Burke in 2006 to empower and support sexually abused women of color, which developed into a globally spread hashtag and movement in 2017 as a respond and protest to the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault.

of comments we heard when we decided to convert to organic. Amongst my father-in-law, he really spit bug over us.

The quotation above shows one farmer's thought of how men and women differ from each other in their way of consider organic farming methods and maybe their view of nature as well. It was mentioned by Farmer 7, that caring about things (environment, people etc.) and to see how things affect one another is a soft, and female, value.

Some farmers did not express any thought of gendered characteristics as biological or socially constructed, but, as mentioned, some of them thought of female attributes, and women in general, as strong, valuable and necessary. This, especially regarding how to get a business to work, thinking holistically, care about the social parts as contact with clients etc, and seeing the importance of every single part in a business and how they are all connected and related to one another.

All farmers are in a consensus when it comes to their interest in, and valuation of, contact with other people, customers as well as other farmers. The partner of Farmer 1 came in during the interview and interjected that Farmer 1 was the one of them who had the direct contact with the customers and that she was the one with that kind of interest. Farmer 1 agrees and tells about her time in the farm shop, conversations with customers, cooperation with other farmers, meetings with other business owners etc. It appeared that she is, or has been, very keen on "networking" in relation to her business. She says that she likes it, but that it also can be intense when she meets the customers in other places and all they talk about is her products. But that the direct contact is important and since it's small-scale it makes her more pedantic and that she would feel ashamed if the products are not as good as she wants them to be.

Farmer 2 also says that she likes the direct contact with her customers, and that is why she goes to the farmer's market to sell her vegetables and berries. Also, that if it would have been the money that controlled it, she would not have gone to the markets since it's not working out financially.

Farmer 3 describes her clientele as one of the many "legs to stand on" and that it is good for her from an economic perspective. But she also talks warmly about the community context, which she cherishes deeply due to her wish to be a part of a bigger organic coherence in which she "founds home". She says:

When I studied to be a gardener, I studied more with the interest of creating an environment that would be good, and I had more focus on people feeling good within it. It has always followed me too.

## 4.4. Symbols, norms and ideals: The Green Conviction of Fairness

This theme is based on the farmers dedication to grow organic and care for the environment, with everything belonging to it such as environmental and social sustainability. Some of the farmers were convinced about an environmentally sustainable way of living and managing their farms from the very start of their business, while some got more convinced after some time. The latter chose organic farming methods initially for economic purposes but ended up seeing it as the only right way with no turning back. Two of the farmers reasoned similar to the latter example while the others, the majority, were “organically convinced” from the start.

### 4.4.1. The Nurturing Mother

Many of the farmers were very passionate when talking about their view of nature and environment. What they had in common was their incredibly strong conviction of running an organic farm. They were expressively supporting the natural ecosystem and the importance of its maintenance, balance and function. Soil health, biodiversity, animal welfare, food nutrition and human health were just some of the topics that were brought up during these interviews. Environmental aspects were more strongly expressed, but many of the farmers themselves also included social aspects in the interviews. Farmer 4 answered as following when being asked why she chose organic methods:

Because I do not want to give anything to my children with agrochemicals, and I do not want to live in it either. I want the meat I breed to be clean. And from the beginning we were all organic. This pesticide-thing has just been added. For people to make money ... when I took over, I went as organic right away. Because I didn't think there were anything to get in the conventional. Partly because seed and fertilizer are so damn expensive. But then, when you start to get into it... Those who use it say that it doesn't go to the groundwater and that it doesn't stay in the ground. That it disappears in the grass before. Well... they have many explanations. But then, when digging into it: 'What happens to all the microorganisms?' and 'what happens with all life in the soil?'. And this way of plowing, sowing, plowing, sowing. What happens then? Yes, then we really start to discover what we are doing. We only deplete the earth. Instead of feeding it to itself, and for us to live *with* it. That's what drives me.

Farmer 4 mentions her children as one of the driving forces to go organic. A long with her care for the nature and a living country side, she thought very much about how she raised their

children and what they could benefit from growing up on organic farms. A thought that was shared by farmer 6 saying that: “we don’t own the earth, we borrow it from our children”. Farmer 6 also says that her change in focus from economic perspectives to a more ecological perspective increased when they got children. Farmer 5, who got interviewed together with Farmer 4, says similarly that:

It is the lifestyle at first that drives one’s business. But also, to be at home. But then, it is also the love of animals and nature. And the kids, that you want to give them the best and you want to do something for the future. And their way of thinking, their way of seeing the world. And then, I can do something good on the plot of land that I own. I really want to take care of it and maintain it and do something good.

#### 4.4.2. The Environmentally Friendly Farmer

Farmer 4 and 5 share their view of nature together with other farmers too, especially with farmer 3 and 7. Farmer 7 says:

It is the value base that controls it. It is the love of nature that touches me at first. Humanism touches me. Ethics. But it is the nature. To be a part of a healthy and ecological ecosystem.

When being asked the question if she could imagine running her business even if it wouldn’t be organic she answered:

Then I wouldn’t have done it. I make *no* compromises. I do not. [...] No compromises. That’s how it is. It must be ethically clean. It must be organic. It must be green. And fair. That, it must be.

All the farmers did most of their work manually without machines and for most of them, this was an active choice. Farmer 5, as many others, says that it is a choice in order to reduce the use of fossil fuels as much as possible as a part of the sustainable farming practice, both in consideration of the environment and themselves.

Seen from an agroecological perspective, Farmer 7 also summarizes quite good the view on farming and way of living, when talking about her permacultural garden:

... the actual cultivation is only one part. It is the *entirety*. It is the energy supply, it is the construction, it is the sewage, it is the resource inventory, it is all levels. In Sweden, the focus is on cultivation, in Austria, the focus is on a holistic perspective. And that’s what permaculture is. That’s how it is. You

must always see it from a holistic perspective. Because everything is connected. [...] All of these pieces are equally important. A cycle. All the time creating cycles. [...] That's what you have to do. And you cannot just make a small cycle. You must include all the pieces in a cycle.

Focusing on the social aspects and social sustainability, it emerged from some interviews that these farmers are very concerned about human well-being as well, as a part of their view on how to manage their farm and actively live more sustainable. This points at a holistic mindset and a tendency to care about not only one's local environment but also on a bigger scale including more people than the nearest and dearest. Farmer 4 says that she wishes to develop her farm into a more "social business" into which she could bring people who has been away from the labor market too long or who has experienced other problems in life in order to help them. Farmer 5 and her husband are a Foster Care Family for children, which also testifies to a social commitment and caring for others. Farmer 3 also reflects on people's attitude and well-being, and her way of handling this is described as following:

Because then people actually see the connection between, food, farm and soil, life and death. [...] People will understand, but it will take time. Therefore, I still believe in this with opening up the farm. Not only because I want to make the world a better place, because I need to make a living out of it. But, what I've created with my own hands, it shows that "you can do this too". In micro-scale, if you wish.

#### 4.4.3. "What kind of world are we living in?"

This theme emerged due to the farmers strongly expressed thought about agriculture in general (modern, conventional agriculture). In line with the farmers engagement of growing and living sustainable, they also shared thoughts about today's agricultural trends in Sweden, and the world. The majority of the farmers expressed a big concern regarding how conventional agriculture and food production works in general. As dedicated as they express to be regarding how they manage their own farms, as worried and frustrated they appeared to be talking about the food industry. They all got the question of what they think about today's modern agriculture and the answers were clear. Farmer 4 says:

You get a little upset when it just expands, and it grows bigger and bigger, the machines grow bigger and bigger, heavier, and as well as how we destroy. We are destroying the land, and we are building on fine farmlands. Just build our cities and kill our small villages. It is tragic to see. ... and then the grocery store says that there is not enough Swedish meat, so we have to import. Like, what kind of world are we living in? Import?

Farmer 7 is of a similar opinion:

What do we do with all these dead soils? When people suddenly can't afford to buy this poison anymore? And Monsanto's entry! With hybrids. Absolutely crazy! There is nothing but nutrient water. That's terrible. And they do not understand the connection between sick people and sick soil. It is the soil that does it, the quality of the soil. It is the one who keeps us healthy. But it is just about the money.

It is inevitable to notice her frustration as she continues:

We build on the best soils in Sweden. I shiver when I say it. It's crazy. I really shiver. We exploit, we turn on soils with plows, we inject chemicals. These soils are dead. As one man once said: doesn't man understand that when the soil is dead, man will die too. I thought that was good. And that's the way it is. We have destroyed so much in this country.

These statements were not only formulated when getting the question of what they think about modern agriculture. Also, when they were asked why they chose organic. As mentioned earlier, they thought of sustainability as something that must permeate every level: environmental, social and economic. It was repeatedly mentioned how the conventional agriculture affects both the environment and people's health, and how these two aspects are connected with the economic perspective:

I think it is scandalous with modern, large-scale farming. It should not be needed to go through big wholesalers, big truck, and hundreds of miles on the roads for people to get food on the tables. It should go directly. And then it is not enough with a "farmers market" once a month. People need food all year round. And then, they will not pay even a sub-price for trash, like this junk food people eat today. Then, I'm not thinking of fast food but... it's not possible to survive *only* as a vegetable producer today. Because people are not prepared to pay for quality, since they are used to get such poor quality at a low price. It is incredibly important, for us, all this movement of talking about sustainable solutions. [Farmer 3]

Finally, Farmer 5 sums up the majority of the farmers' opinions in a very suitable way:

I think the future is in the small farming business, there is no doubt about it. Like, if we are going somewhere, that's the way we have to go. Larger and larger does not work.

## 5. Analysis

In this chapter, the thematic analysis of the material is being presented. Each and every theme from the previous chapter is being analyzed and connected with the theoretical framework as well as previous research. It is the processes of how gendered structures are reproduced as described by Acker that guides the very analysis. Here, the themes and processes are separated as in the previous chapter to simplify for the reader and researcher. Even so, the different sub-themes are pieces that have been taken out of their context for deeper analysis, but that still should be seen in connection with the others. The sub-themes are results from the processes of gender reproduction and therefore belong to more than one process due to the interconnection.

### 5.1. Creation of Identity

#### 5.1.1. “A lifestyle choice” – in relation to what?

The narratives are based on the farmers situated knowledge. The situations for the women are different from each other, and so are their reasons for living as they do, as a result of their different personalities and context (Harding, 2004). Two of the farmers, for example, see the economic potential in converting into organic while the majority of the farmers in this study see it as a part of their lifestyle affected by their own formation of identity. The ones who felt a strong emotional connection to their job and who talked about it with great enthusiasm had all different backgrounds. Some were born into the life on a farm with parents who were farmers, while some were not. Some had an academic background within other occupations, while some had not studied on higher level. Still, it is commonly for all the farmers to contest modern agriculture and conventional farming, and for some to contest general norms of how to create ones' lifestyle. Their description of themselves is a way for the farmers to deal with, and define, their situation, and as within feminist standpoint theory, it is their lives where the research is primarily based (Harding, 2004). By telling their stories and explaining their choices, they also position themselves in a certain way in relation to the outside world, depending on how they want to be perceived and depending on how they perceive their own context (e.g. Acker, 1990; Little & Austin, 1996). Self-identification makes us talk about ourselves in a certain way depending on how we want to be understood. The way that they categorize themselves through their stories, is at same time self-fulfilling as it creates a feeling

of belonging with like-minded people within the same category. The majority of the women position themselves as independent, organic farmer owners with strong driving force and a clear standpoint in the debate about sustainable agriculture without a shred of doubt. This position is placed within a sector that is otherwise characterized by big, conventional farms and companies. What they do also stands in contrast to the male domination portraying the agricultural sector in general. They thus create an identity for themselves as enterprising and conscious women. This challenge gendered identities within agriculture in general, especially conventional, but somehow conform gendered norms by choosing organic and small-scale. Identity is presented by individuals very often based on the consciousness of other gendering processes in organizations (Acker, 1990). Hence, these women present and identify themselves in a way that is depending on how they perceive gendering within agriculture. According to the theory of feminist standpoint, their backgrounds and personal context is also having an impact on their narratives (Harding, 2004). Their positioning can also be connected with Acker's (1990) stated process of symbols, norms and ideals when analyzing how they want to be understood which is probably based on their own norms of how one should live according to gender.

So, the context in which they are positioned, affects their narratives and thereby even their defense of a rather poor economic existence with a voluntary and self-fulfilling way of life. The women explain their way of living and working by defining it as an active lifestyle choice. It appeared during the interviews that they didn't separate themselves or their personal lives from the farming businesses. They are thus operating in two intertwined spheres that both of them are gendered (cf. Andersson 2017). Apart from their interest in farming, their choice is also imbued with respect to the women's families in connection with a healthy lifestyle and a good childhood; an environmentally conscious perspective with the nature in focus; as well as a negative attitude towards modern agriculture and modern society in general. These reasons have led to their decision to live as they do, thus accepting any disadvantages, such as a limited economy, long working days, big personal responsibility etc. These motives show how the women perceive the nature as something to care for. When working the land carefully, the soil can in turn provide healthy food for the families. Referring to the theoretical framework regarding the relationship between the social creation of nature and gender, the motives creates a gendered identity for the women as caring and nurturing regarding both family and nature (cf. Castree & Braun 2005, and Nightingale (2006) for further information on this relationship). Regarding the theory of social nature, the women show how their perception of nature affects their approach to it. What is told here regarding their motives, is also very much relatable to what Pettersson and Arora- Jonsson (2009) tells about women's motive to become farm owners,

referring to both the connection to the family and economic motives. Also, as mentioned by Farmer 3, the local community and the communal context is of big importance, which is also mentioned as a motive by Pettersson and Arora-Jonsson (2009). The desire to be independent is mentioned both in their article, and in the article by Nordström Källström (2002) in the motives she calls “The so-called freedom” and “The entrepreneur”. Also, the way of seeing it as a lifestyle including more aspects than just farming can also be found in the Danish article by Pedersen, K. B. & Kjaergard, B. (2004). The different motives and explanations can be understood and observed in more than one way. It might be unclear, even for the farmers, if it actually is an active and voluntary choice, through which they have freely accepted its different meanings and impacts on their lives. It can also be understood as an unconscious strategy on how to deal with the work that they have chosen, but whose consequences they don’t appreciate as much as the actual work. Is their voluntary lifestyle thereby affected by some compulsion where they chose to live a certain life but are being forced to sacrifice some things and justifies that by calling it a lifestyle choice? This is a complex question to answer, and it is a question with many different answers depending on the people being asked. The answers in this study is similar to the one’s in Andersson’s study (2016), where the women also explain it as a choice. However, which is also stressed, the choice of being a farmer and the independency that it includes does not necessarily mean that one can choose to work less or that the labor is more voluntary. The women in this study might choose when and how they want to manage the farm, but not what is needed to conduct. Their so-called freedom is thus chosen at the expense of some cons.

These farmers wish to be identified and connected with certain appearances, and therefore answer as they do. It also appears easier for some to describe what they *don’t* like and by that explaining how they want to live instead, for example: organic instead of conventional; independent farmers instead of farmers operating under the influence of others; people making active choices instead of people following trends and norms etc. Their narratives are thus including some statements even if their way of living is showing something else, as the farmers working with their husbands where the division of labor is often gendered, and the structure of the farm is similar to patterns of gendering, as being described in the context. As mentioned being stated by Acker (1990), the identity is shaped based on gender created through several processes, and is thus affecting how people live their lives. Also, that identity is partly shaped through expectations on people. Connecting this to the women in the study, they probably know about expectations and general assumptions on farmers. As mentioned by both Brandth (1995;2002), Chiappe & Butler Flora (1998) and Cassel & Pettersson (2015), there are gendered

stereotypes and codes within agriculture, and these women are aware of some of these, which according to Acker (1990) affects how they identify themselves. Through their choices, they have taken a step away from norms both regarding agriculture and gender. Being a woman that chooses to take place in a male-coded sphere, with unconventional methods and on a small-scale level means deviating from several norms. Both the women themselves and their farms represent what traditionally speaking has low value in the hierarchical, capitalist and patriarchal structures of organizations and industries. They challenge gendered norms and stereotypes by not wanting to be identified with conventional farming or to follow the stream. It is also a part of self-identification that somehow has a bigger value than living in economic abundance. Long working days therefore becomes a side effect that they otherwise wouldn't accept, as well as the limited income. On the other hand, they reinforce norms and expectations on women regarding literature on gender, nature and farming (e.g. Pettersson & Arora-Jonsson, 2009; Cassel & Pettersson, 2015). This, by the purpose of having a business, such as responsibility for family and kids, and caring about the community and nature. This positioning, in a gender analysis, is also reinforced when it is put in relation to the gendered structure that characterizes agriculture in general.

The disadvantages of the lifestyle are valued to a very low degree by the women in relation to how much they value the positive things with their occupation. This can be explained both as a genuine pleasure and pride of what they have accomplished or as a justification of what is inadequate, as if the prospects for better conditions are perceived as too difficult to realize due to the structure. The poor profitability and long working days can, in their situation, lead to a need of motivating their choices in terms of lifestyle, driving force and interest. Although, the narratives show a complex situation that probably includes several perspectives and dimensions. Many of the women say that there is an awareness of gendering but that it doesn't bother them, and that it would never affect them thanks to their conviction. Still, as Acker (1990) say, the consciousness of this affect how people identify themselves.

This theme is, as mentioned, very much connected with the identity described by Nordström Källström as "the so-called freedom" as the farmers emphasize the value of being free. But also, in general connected to the way she describes the life of a farmer as a lifestyle and a part of one's identity. Some of the farmers in this study are passionate about their lifestyle and express their chosen life with pride while one of the farmers, especially one, had a more bothered attitude towards her living. So, this "freedom" is more or less voluntary for which they all have to pay a price. A price which obviously is lower for some while higher for others.

The majority of the farmers are critical towards conventional agriculture, as well as towards gender norms and gender inequality. Despite whether they reproduce gendering structures or not, they all (except one) talk about their farms with pride, and are proud of what they have accomplished. Their position, as within a minor group in the big sector of food and farming, makes it easy to understand why they don't see themselves as victims of oppression. For them, talking and actually living within this context, it would be harder and more destructive if one experienced discrimination on a personal level. It is probably easier to see it among others, but not for oneself, and therefore defend economic unsustainability with "a lifestyle choice" and to feel happy of what is accomplished instead of how things could or should be in the best of worlds. At least, that is what they want to tell: that they have chosen this life, no matter the circumstances. They position themselves as independent organic farm owners and smallholders, put in relation to conventional, and often male, farmers operating on a much bigger scale.

## 5.2. Structures

### 5.2.1. The Need of Complementary Activities – A Vicious Circle

In agriculture, success and prosperity is measured in terms of production and economic profitability, which indicates hierarchal structures of labor and organization (Acker 1990, 2006). This measurement has automatically led to that even the farm size, both the area; number of cattle; and the revenue, is being valued more or less. The norm does not only mean that a farmer has large fields and high yields. The stereotype image also involves the use of heavy machines (e.g. Brandth 1995). Because of this norm, a work structure is created in which a certain approach and method is respected and valued higher than others that are positioned outside the norm. Also, norms of using machinery creates both a need for certain skills, and subject positions more applicable on men since they are related to physical strength (e.g. Brandth 1995). The consequence is therefore that small-scale farmers, especially organic, and female farmers, stand in contrast to the norm and thus, the work effort is often valued lower. As the organization of work and its valuation appears to be, it also shows that it is the female coded approaches in agriculture that are valued the lowest. It includes the manually performed jobs as well as the caring and thoughtful attitude towards the job (see e.g. Chiappe & Butler Flora (1998), Wells & Gradwell (2001)). The constant recreation of this structure complicates the job for women and for organic and small-scale farmers as their work is not valued enough in the sector. This theme is a consequence of the agribusiness' structure, and the result becomes

visible in the nature of work with a need for complementary activities and to work across multiple spheres, which is less common in men's work.

The content of what was told by the farmers was that it is more or less difficult to get by financially on the farm work. From a sustainability perspective, there are clear shortcomings in the economic section. Although, the farmers' stories testify about a reality perception where environmental and social sustainability weighs heavier and compensates for possible economic weaknesses. However, between the lines there are glimpses of a desire (rather than a bitterness) that it could have been better on the economic part and that a more sustainable economic situation would be more than well received even though it is not an expressed priority.

One could ask why the reality among these farmers (with some exceptions) looks like this. Many of them devote basically all their time to farm work and their working day is often longer than the classic eight hours. As they say, it is a lifestyle choice since they dedicate so much time on the farm. Still, it does not pay off financially. Some of the farmers talked about an expansion and development of the farm as a way to earn more money, but that in itself requires money, and time, that was not available nor accessible at the moment. It emerges, from many interviews, a certain need of balancing the time one has in relation to the economic situation. Many of the farmers need, if not complementary activities or support from a partner, an extra job a few hours per week to manage the economy. But the time they dedicate to this eventual job, is the time they need to expand and improve the farm. Likewise, some feel a need for having an employee in order to expand, but for this they need a better economy. In the end, the need of complementary activities creates a vicious circle hard to break.

Regarding the women's narratives on certification, there is a sign of a process that potentially reproduces gender within the structure of regulations. At least, the narratives show how regulations can create problems for those being affected by them, as being addressed by Bacchi (2017) regarding policies, mentioned in the theoretical framework. Since the market for organic resources is limited compared to conventional, this leads to bigger costs for organic farmers and an increased need to be self-sufficient with reduced inputs, as the women tell. This can be complicated if the requirement for certified farmers is too strict, or too demanding in terms of resources including paperwork, routines, specific skills etc. Certification requirements can potentially reproduce gendered structures and hierarchies if they are not developed correctly with regards to how small-scale farmers actually operate. If certification requirements are too focused on a certain scale, certain yield etc. (as told by the women), the farmers lose some of their dependency and flexibility in order to adapt. The requirement of being able to produce a certain yield, and decide this on forehand, obliges the farmers to focus much more on extractive

farming than many of them do today. The case of many of the women is that they have smaller plots of cultivation, and some of them apply methods such as intercropping, as well as having many different kinds of crops. This makes it difficult for many of them to calculate the coming harvest. If they were about to adapt to some regulations they tend to be forced to grow fewer crops on bigger fields. This means to go away from their type of farming, and from an agroecological perspective, their farms would decrease its diversity as well as their self-sufficiency. In fact, the women in this study who have larger fields and who are more specialized in one or a few crops, are also the ones that are the least worried about the economy. The more similar conventional farming, the more economic sustainable the farms appeared to be. Regarding Pedersen & Kjaergard (2004), women in their study said that the organic farming sector is slowly beginning to imitate conventional farming in terms of bigger scale and more extractive farming which also indicates a change in the construction of nature (Castree & Braun, 2005). Hence, one can be organic and alternative to a certain extent, but there is clearly a limitation if one also wishes to maintain economic sustainability. As previous research show, men have larger farms and more resources very much due to the tradition of patrilineal heritage (Flygare *et al.*, 2003), as is the case of one of the farms with the least economic concern. Thus, men, and male-coded approaches to agriculture, generally have better terms under which they operate. This finding of inadequate certification requirements shows, when analysed through Acker's (2006) theories of inequality regimes (here applied on the agricultural sector), how hierarchal structures can be processes creating oppression of already marginalized groups. Brandth (2002), also points out structures within institutions, referring to both regulations and production of science, as necessary to change in order to break processes that reproduces gender and oppression. At least, this analysis show how organic small-scale farmers are being limited from developing their alternative farming methods and still maintain a proper economic and environmental sustainability (cf. Pedersen & Kjaergard, 2004). Pedersen & Kjaergard also state the problem with difficult and strict regulations, which they say is partly a result of the growing organic market that requires more regulations due to increased competition. This illustration additionally indicates signs of a gendered governance (see e.g. Brush, 2003).

## 5.3. Interactions

### 5.3.1. "Women are more socially active, men just do" – at whose expense?

Even if not all the farmers directly agree with the thought of a gendered sector, many narratives show on connections with previous research on this topic and some certain codes were able to

extract from the transcripts: Men drives the tractor; women do more of manual work; women have more responsibility over kids; women are more responsible for domestic work; women consider organic earlier and more than men, as men are more sceptical about organic. Also, as the headline shows: women are more socially active. Some quotations in previous chapter show how women are the ones considering organic farming before their male counterparts and connects with the statement mentioned in chapter 2 that women are more concerned about the environment, as stressed by Wandel & Bugge (1997) and Beardsworth et al. (2002). It is also relatable with similar statements in the articles by Davidson & Freudenburg (1996), Burton et al (1999) and Karami & Mansoorabadi (2008). Additionally, Wells' & Gradwell's article (2001) brings up the expectation of mechanization as more appealing among men. Men are said to be more interested in mechanization, or at least they are usually the ones occupying that sphere, in the same time as they are more sceptical about organic farming. It is also mentioned by the farmers, that men are usually the ones commenting the farmers' choice of converting. According to Arora-Jonsson's article (2009), negative attitudes from other people is one of the things preventing women in their enterprising, which is comparable with the concern of not being a part of the norm, as explained by Cahlin et al. (2008). However, support from others is, on the other hand, something that spurs them instead. From the interviews, the farmer with the least ambition did not experience much support from her husband (farmer 2). In fact, she even mentions this lack of support as one reason for not expanding her farm. In contrast, some of the other women (especially farmer 1, 4, 5 and 7) emphasize the importance of having contact with other farmers doing similar farming, and maintain the relationship with those farmers who inspire them.

Regarding negative attitudes that some of these women experience from primarily men, it appears as if men are expected to react negatively on something that is not coping with what's stereotypically masculine. Since it is male-coded to like machines, drive a tractor, being a business man or to get your hands dirty, it automatically becomes male-coded to be against what can be seen as the opposite of this. Conventional agriculture is more male coded than organic, simply because organic farming witness about caring – as in female-coded values. Do men, who complain about organic farming, therefore really think that it is bad, or are they somewhat expected to be against it? As Brush (2003) says, gender imbues every structure in society and it penetrates the mindset of individuals as well as institutions. Likewise, Acker (1990) explain in her theory how gender is reproduced through individual gender identification based on the consciousness of gender in other processes, as well as the consciousness of gendered expectations. In her article she even addresses this phenomenon as especially

emerging regarding masculinity. Also, that people's identification can very often be found in the pressure of living up to expectations. Thus, it has an impact on us all, and women as well as men are affected by its consequences. Male farmers seem to experience female farmers who grow organic as threatening and that they thereby "violate conventions of relative subordination to men" (Acker, 2006:447). The expectations on men and women are thus shaping their identity, as well as their farming approach. Once again, Acker (1990), says that our identity is shaped through other processes. Men want to be associated with what's male-coded, and women tend to follow female-coded associations even though some norms are being challenged at the very same time.

Farmers, and their roles, in a gendered sector is clearly affected by hierarchical concepts as described by Acker (1990,2006). Some jobs within agriculture are higher ranked than others and it is not difficult to see through which the more admirable jobs are. The farmers in the study say that whenever someone (especially a man) "raise their eyebrows" over something that the farmer does, it is when she is conducting a typical male-coded job, such as using heavy machines, driving the tractor etc. It is in these moments when female farmers both get credit for "working like a man" but also get criticism for doing the hard work by herself, doing the work incorrectly, as well as she tends to meet negative attitudes for taking place in a male sphere. This complexity makes it difficult to understand what place the women can take within agriculture without being questioned. Whenever they are doing something outside the female-coded norm, they receive both complains and complements, and thereby being marked as different for doing something non-female-coded. The issue here, however, lies within the social constructions of gender. Without such structure, there would not be a need for people to react when the norms get blurred or crossed over. But still, female coded jobs are not as worth admiring as male coded jobs, and therefore men usually prefer not to do it. As Brandth (2002) states in her conclusion: men do not want to do the typically female jobs or chores and therefore, women who farm will always do farming combined with traditional female chores within the household even if they are the actual farmers, not farmwives. Men thereby resist the possible association with women and this hierarchy within division of labor reproduces gender. The fields within which the women receive credit is when it comes to the social part and the interaction with customers, or when women give credit to other women that they know are "the spider in the web". However, when women are described as socially competent, or as a more caring human being, expectations and perspectives on men and women are continuously reproduced. Skills and notions are gendered, and as the theoretical framework tells, it is very much about how we are raised and how society treats us (see Nightingale, 2006). Being the

spider in the web is not only the case in this study. It is also able to compare with Andersson's article (2016), in which the women's labor is spanning over several fields and described as more flexible.

Women's role as the socially active part has been formulated by many of the farmers, and by other researchers (see Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). Four of the farmers expressed this statement, even one of the farmers' husband. Two of the farmers who work together with their men said that they, the women, were responsible for the communication with customers. That they liked it more than their men, and that they had these types of skills. Another farmer expressed this characteristic as female values, e.g. soft values, and as something biological. However, when women are being ascribed as successful in the interaction with customers, a gendering construction of skills is taking place, as mentioned above. It is the assumption of female values, such as caring, which in the relation to the idea of maternity are extended in the relationship with customers and is not only limited to the household structure. The "caring femininity", and the expansion of reproductive labor, is connected with providing good service and these skills are associated with women. This construction of skills creates subjectivities and reproduces gender. The subject positions shaped by "caring femininity" are the same within the household as on the farm.

Some of the farmers say that this was general within the business: that women in general are the ones building and maintaining contacts as well as communicating more with costumers. Two women said that female farmers, in family farms, tend to be the "spider in the web", meaning that she is the one keeping everything together. In cases where this happens, women adapt to the male partner more than the other way around. The women tend to be involved within every activity and keep every part together. Men, on the other hand, are less likely to work between spheres, probably (once again) as a result of the possible association with women and female values as they are not as appreciated. Also, because there are no expectations on men doing differently or assisting women in "female" chores, as a result of gendering. As quotations in the result show, women are repeatedly described as the ones having control over the many parts in their business. The men, on the contrary, just "do stuff", without much thought. The female and male norms seem to be so implemented in our minds, because of culture and tradition, that we take them for granted which makes us blind to them. It is not until we put them together, as in a research, that we see the patterns and can start to analyse why "men drive the tractor", for example, or why "women are more socially active". These findings are comparable to previous research, e.g. Wells & Gradwell (2001), Trauger (2004). The patterns are based in expectations on skills, and can once again be referred to Acker (2006).

Her theory show how expectations shape people's behaviour both in organizations and in daily interactions among men and women, and this is visible even in the skills people are ascribed. The expectations on skills, and its division, result in the weak belief that women could be as skilled as men performing the same jobs (Acker, 2006). This, a possible explanation of why women tend to keep to female associated labor.

Many of the farmers (especially the ones running the farm with their husbands) describes the division of labor, representation in decision-making and possessed skills as something that is not bothering them and that is shaped naturally and voluntarily between them two. But when looking at how gender is structured and how gendering is produced, it cannot be that voluntarily when following the very same patterns. Somehow it is indirectly expressed similar to the farmer whose gendering practices and constructing of gendered structures can be seen as a gendered practice of resistance towards the gendering described by Acker. Even so, gendered norms are reproduced and created due to the farmers expectations on men and women, even if not mentioned by them. This becomes clear when comparing the farmers' narratives since the gendered pattern is repeatedly described and comparable. The farmers individually express that they are satisfied with how the farm is being managed, but many of them are concerned about the gendered structure within the sector. This, at the same time as they actually are reproducing this structure themselves. The farmers somehow defend their own lifestyle and choices with satisfaction but despise gendering outside themselves and their farm. Also, when describing the differences between what men and women do on a farm is often expressed with bitterness in the voice when it is not involving themselves. Still, they are talking about their farms and their situation in relation to themselves as independent farmers. They are all dedicated to their farms and are striving for their goals with pride. However, the gendered structures that can be found in the cases are giving the women subject positions similar to examples from previous research, as the caring and nurturing woman, but at the same time as someone contesting and challenging some stereotypes when taking place in a male dominated sector. When the division of labor continues to be gendered, and feminine and masculine subjectivities among the women and their male partners maintains. In this study, the women do not uphold the idea of a lady-like woman as they are doing a male-coded job and work between male and female spheres. But, other values classified as female are preserved as the women being caring towards people and nature. The traditional subject positions change with the fact that women on these farms are not subordinated any man, or boss for that matter, but still they operate under general processes of gendering. They are also challenging the general idea of a farmer's identity and contest modern agriculture. Because these women are not farm wives, they are farmers.

## 5.4. Symbols, norms and ideals

### 5.4.1. The Green Conviction of Fairness – On what basis?

The women's dedication to a sustainable lifestyle and principle of "no compromises – it must be green and fair" (Farmer 7), is related to Acker's process of symbols, norms and ideals. It is also referable to the process of identity but considered to fit more into symbols. Acker describes how gender is created through symbols and is very much connected with culture. As described by other researchers (see Wells and Gradwell, 2001, and Trauger, 2004), the ambience in organic and alternative farming is more appealing to many women because of the many times more equal culture among its practitioners. Alternative farming symbolizes a certain atmosphere where women are more welcome and that is one reason to why they choose this path. On the other hand, this type of farming systems is more female coded and the norms within its culture reflects female coded personalities more than male-coded ones due to its caring approach and view on nature. The feminine norms are more likely to be found within organic farming than conventional. Organic farming's norms and ideals therefore attracts women and makes them position themselves as women even though they are a part of a male dominated sector. So, when women within farming choose organic methods, they maintain their identities as women at the same time as their actions contributes with a reproduction of gendered structures. Within organic farming there are also certain ideals. In contrast to conventional farming, which is more extractive and focused on profit, organic farming is about using the right methods with respect to the nature, the farmers and the consumers. Referring to what many of the women in this study say, it appears as if the ideal is to be as self-sufficient and "green" as possible even if it is not very profitable. Also, it seems like it does not belong to the norm or ideal to be money-driven. Maybe this comes from the statement of being positioned in contrast to the conventional industry: organic instead of conventional and less bothered about its profit. Does it not belong to the ideals of organic farmers to be both organic and of economic interest? One farmer (farmer 2), on the other hand, say that her husband chose organic because of economic reasons regarding subsidies. Still, she says that her own farm isn't possible to operate if she would do it for money, especially due to the size of it, which is also being stated by many of the other women.

This theme is also referable to Nordström Källström's article (2002) and the categorized motive of becoming a farmer described as "The farmer in harmony with nature". Farmers can be both friends of the earth, but as this study describes in the previous chapters, they can also

be the opposite depending on how they conduct their work. Agriculture and farming can deplete ecosystem services and be extremely destructive for the earth and all living organisms. But, if the right governance can facilitate for farmers doing their job sustainable, it doesn't have do harm neither the soil, the water, the air nor the animals. As mentioned by Lowe (1997), farmers sometimes overlook environmental and agricultural policies almost as a way to defy the ones making them due to farmers perception of politicians' lack of agricultural knowledge and understanding of a life on the countryside. In this study, the farmers strive for being in harmony with the nature, and many of them want to live and operate "beyond organic" and beyond agricultural policies that most of them find defective. In this case, the farmers don't defy policies as a consequence of them being too strict. Rather, many of them want to go beyond the regulations since the majority find politicians too little involved with how damaging modern agriculture actually is. Their standpoint is that the world is facing environmental and social challenges, and that they have the power to do something about it. Even here, the farmers position themselves against agricultural norms, but they are also positioning themselves within the frames of what is described as typically female. That is, caring and nurturing regarding both nature and human lives. They contest the way of seeing nature as something that exist for people and put a higher value in the wellbeing of their environment. In such way, their farming practices recreates them as women, when being observed from a gendered perspective of what is female or male. Thus, this theme is connected also with processes of creation of identity as well as structures. Their occupation as farmers challenges stereotyped norms of men and women, but their approach recreates them. This reflection of a gendered structure is even clearer in the cases where a male partner is present, looking at how the division of labor and skills is organized.

The citations that belong to this theme show the women's relation to nature in the way of how they understand it and make use of it. Regarding the concept of people's social construction of nature, these women creates the nature in a way so that they feel the need to respect it and nurture it. Their approach to it, and their farming methods, are less extractive than within conventional farming because their relationship to nature is framed by a female-coded construction of it.

Many of the women find regulations made by certification bodies tricky to follow due to how narrow they are, but they also find general agricultural policies too vague. One farmer says that when she wanted to build plus- and low-energy-houses on her farm, she had to appeal the building permit twice because: "...this is too organic...". She meant that in spite of the relatively good environmental policy in Sweden, many of the people are not able to go outside

the box of what is considered as normal regarding environmental issues. She sees this the way she does because of previous experiences in other countries. She positions herself very much as a woman nurturing the earth and is embracing her female values but also caring about her male values. She despises conventional agriculture and compares both her farm and lifestyle with conventional farming and “mainstream lifestyles”. Her way of describing herself as a woman and the female values in contrast to male values effects how the farm is managed since she is the one in charge. Therefore, the farm is somehow structured by gender and gendering is continuously created reproduced. But she does so with a clear purpose and with very much consciousness as she believes in male and female values as biological and beneficial for a successful organization, society etc. The gendering on her farm is shaped to emphasize our different skills and they are all equally important according to her. So, this is gendering that, in contrast to what is said by Acker, thrives for equality and appreciation rather than the reproduction of oppression even if there is a gendered division of labor as well as expected knowledge. This farmer does not measure gender in a hierarchical order, rather as a horizontal one where female and male values almost can be put on a flat scale but equally important. This is gendering practices constructing gendered structures but as a practice of resistance towards gendering described by Acker.

In contrast to the study of Nordström Källström (2002), the people in this study do put the nature as first priority (at least the majority), like the principles of ecocentrism. Still, many of them do it from a personal perspective where they want the best for their children and future generations, while many of them also consider the potential economic benefits as a plus.

The green conviction amongst the farmers is the reason why their farms are as sustainable as they are. From an agroecological perspective, the majority of the women have the right approach. Without them mentioning the term “agroecology”, they are all more or less living and managing their farms by agroecological principles. The key elements, mentioned in the theoretical framework, are fulfilled by almost every farmer in the study. They mention the importance of all elements and how everything is connected. Nothing can be excluded if one wants sustainability. Maybe not all the farmers individually can be placed on the highest levels of conversion, because they are still in a process of developing their farms. Some care more about human and social values, some about circular economy, while some care more about natural resources etc. In general, almost everyone has an “agroecological mindset” even if it is expressed in other words. As mentioned, agroecology has a lot in common with systems thinking and does not function without a critical thinking as well as the ability to understand interconnections between different entities to get the whole picture. Agroecology, and systems

thinking, requires that the person in question (or organization) have a holistic approach in both theory and practice. The farmers in this study are all very critical and they strive individually to do what's right according to them, regarding both environmental and social values. Meanwhile these women operate sustainable, the study show on gendered structures and the question is whether this structures somehow prevents them from developing their farms for the better. According to the women's narratives, they can manage their farms as they wish thanks to their convictions. One woman (farmer 2), express her wish of more engagement from her husband, the others appear more satisfied with the division of labor and organizational structure. For them, the biggest obstacle for developing their farm and being more self-sufficient, lies within the question of regulations and economy. This study shows how the male-coded fields and norms have a higher value in the sector and that this structure affects smallholders and organic farmers negatively. So, issues of gendering are more likely to be found in the industrial structure than on farm level. Still, the division of skills is a potential obstacle. If the women are known as "the spider in the web" meanwhile their male counterparts "just do", a possible thought can be that if the responsibility of all tasks were more equally shared in line with a more equal expectation on men's and women's skills, there would be two people seeing the whole picture which probably would give better results. The thought of women as the spider, is somewhat comparable to farmer 7's thought of women as process oriented and men as goal oriented. In contrast to her point of view, these division of skills exist due to norms and ideal on how people should be. Also, if these were not the norm, women and men would be freer to operate in accordance with their actual skills and the division of labor could thus look different. Since gender affects the sector, and the association with femininity is less valued, organic farming is not prioritized as it should. If this structure would change, there would also be a greater possibility of an increased organic farming sector, and these farmers would have better working conditions, as better access to important resources. The risk of strong gender codes implies potential obstacles for agricultural development. Gendered structures help to create a clear boundary between conventional and sustainable agriculture, and what they represent. This increases the risk of giving rise to a conflict already existing between the different farming types. It is important to distinguish their concepts, but a conflict is destructive as it shows signs of greater skepticism and a worse attitude towards a conversion to organic. Agroecology thus need a gender sensitive approach in order to be developed.

## 6. Discussion and Critical Reflections

In this chapter, several parts of the study are discussed and reflected upon from a critical perspective. First, some of the findings from the analysis are discussed further. Following, critical reflections of the topic and methodology are addressed. Finally, further considerations regarding future research.

### 6.1. The Findings

#### 6.1.1. Who They Are and Why

The question about economic sustainability is of least priority among these farmers, compared to social and environmental sustainability. If these farmers were of different background or had a different geographical anchoring, the priority might have been different. In a society were a more inadequate welfare system and a worse safety net than the Swedish one, farmers probably would have argued differently and might have been forced to choose another path. To take financial risks has a higher price in some countries. The consequences as such, depends on where you operate, and these farmers have the privilege to take such a risk thanks to where they are positioned. In a state where there, for example, are no possibilities to receive subsidies, or no free healthcare or education, people usually need to prioritize their finance more even if they also wish to feed their children with the best food and spend more time with the family. The place where people are positioned is therefore affecting their worldview and lifestyle choice. Thus, the findings in this study that implicates that a motive regarding environmental sustainability weighs heavier than economic sustainability must be observed in the light of its context. If one wishes to compare the findings in this study with studies based on other women's narratives, the very context must be considered and involved in the comparison and analysis.

The thought of women as a more holistically human being compared to men is here seen, as mentioned, as socially constructed just as other female assigned attributes, as stressed by many of the researchers referred to in the context and theory. It can also be viewed as biological characteristics coherent with one of the farmer's perception, as well as the one ecofeminist theory which is of the opinion that women by nature have a more holistic

mindset and thus focus on social and ecological aspects (Stephens, 2013). These different views are important to discuss regarding what the two concepts contribute with. However, it may not matter if it is biological or socially constructed looking at what subject positions these gendered structures are giving farmers. Because, the subject positions are the same, and those continue to be produced due to structures, identification, interaction and symbols within organizations and everyday lives. These structures shape individuals and guides them into certain paths which most probably prevents people to see or choose other alternatives, which may limit their potential. A possible thought here, is that it causes a risk that prevents potential developments of organizations, or industries for that matter, as people are limited to a certain frame. The gendered structure has also shown to be devastating for food systems and for environmental development. If both researchers within agroecology and members of FAO, show that gender equality is an essential part of food systems, the processes of gendering needs to be worked against. Because gendering processes do maintain oppressions, no matter if values are biological or social. It might be easier and more concrete to point at practical errors people commit. Something as, for some, abstract as oppressions, especially structural ones, might be harder when one can't see it with the eye. It might also be something that people don't want to see or admit. Maybe it is because people with power or privileges feel threatened and think that a change would be devastating for them and their success. However, every one of us can choose to learn about it, act from it and strive for a change. Hopefully it will be more woven into agroecology that we need to see what social sustainability is about, and the different angles of it. Sexism, racism, classism, etc. are oppressions that exists in every society in all parts of the world and it would be naïve to deny the fact that it would not be present in the agricultural sector. If agroecology is ought to be sustainable and addressed as the answer to problems caused by today's modern and conventional agriculture, it must include social sustainability and social justice. If it is aiming at being a holistic science, practice and movement, it must recognize social problems and work against those as well as working against the use of harmful pesticides or simple crop rotations for example. That is why agroecology is so important: because its concept aims at being holistic. And therefore, it is also a complicated and complex discipline which requires a lot of work and awareness among its practitioners.

### 6.1.2. How They Farm and Why

If female-coded professions, work activities and attitudes would have been valued as high as the male-coded, the conditions for the women in this study probably would have been better. Such a hierarchical sector as the agricultural one makes it clear how the terms and conditions are when operating outside the norm. For example, the market for organic resources such as seeds, plant material, fertilizers, suitable machinery, etc. is more limited than conventional products. Even so, organic farming is nothing new or unexplored (Ma & Joachim, 2006).

Regarding the holistic approach of agroecology, the very concept of it will immediately fail if we don't identify and recognize the prevalence of discrimination and the problems that it causes. Also, if we choose not to agree with the fact that women are oppressed by men and subordinated patriarchal structures, or if we deny the fact that black people, people of color and ethnic minorities are oppressed by white people, white supremacy and racism. In the same way as if we ignore the oppression and power that big companies and capitalism wield over smallholders and earlier mentioned groups. The ignorance of these facts let modern agriculture and destructive food systems continue with everything that leads to soil fatigue, contaminated water bodies, land grabbing, herbicide resistant weeds, negative health effects, etc. Then, agroecology will never reach its full potential.

According to FAO, there is a need of the right governance supporting these kinds of farming systems by, for example, securing access to resources especially during a conversion and start-up. Also, "market regulations allowing for branding of differentiated agroecological produce..." (FAO, 2018). If so, farmers that choose not to have big fields of a certain size, or having intercropping etc, are not yet included in the largest certification body in Sweden, according to some of these farmers. This means that, for instance, permacultural small-scale farmers find it challenging to be certified due to their farming system in spite FAO's stated need of responsible governance.

As some women tell, the certification organization's regulations seem to not always be suitable nor applicable for small-scale farming. Connecting this with the fact that men in general has bigger farms and more access to resources very much due to the traditional structure of patrilineal heritage, show how certification requirements potentially reproduce gendered structures and hierarchies. Depending on how they are developed, they create certain subject positions. However, if these restrictions are not followed, the farmers lose their certification and thereby take the risk not being able to sell their products for the same price or to the same amount. The women indicate that the certification label increases the value of the product as a result of people's skepticism against organic products. According to some of the women,

consumers tend to mistrust organic produce more than conventional, and are rarely prepared to pay more for the food. Their unwillingness to pay more is believed to generate from lack of knowledge about the sector and conventional farming methods effects on both the environment and people. One possible interpretation of this is that the hierarchical structure forms the basis for this too. If the structure and the norms would have been different and if there would be a more balanced equality between actors within the sector, unconventional methods would have been valued higher and it had been marketed differently. Then the consumers would receive more truthful information and transparency about the food systems, which would lead to increased consumption of organic food. A reduced price on essential resources for organic farmers together with a better accessibility would also lead to a reduced product price and thus be more attractive to more people in society. Because, as a matter of fact, not all people have the privilege to use food quality over food price, even if they would like to. To return to some of the quotes, it is hard to believe that anyone would prefer to give their children food with residues of agrochemicals, or to contribute to an sector that pollutes water bodies etc. More likely it is that people wish each other and the planet well. Therefore, it becomes unlogic that conventional farming is the norm and the most accepted way of producing food, despite the history of how agrochemicals became a need. This can only be changed by awareness and willingness to change among everyone involved, especially the ones with the greatest influence and power over the structures. They need to agree to reverse the structures and even out the imbalance by giving the voice and power to more people.

The farmers' critical approach to modern agriculture should also be emphasized further. As passionate they are when talking about their farming methods and lifestyle, at least as frustrated they are when talking about today's agricultural trends. They condemn the methods of conventional farming, as well as they criticize the food trade and especially the import of foods. Also, how cities are growing while the maintaining and development of small villages are not being prioritized as it should. Here, there is both a strong engagement regarding these issues and a wish for change, but also a bitterness over the situation in Sweden, and globally. For the farmers, it seems as if the organic farmers would receive better support from the government, they could expand and develop faster. Then Sweden wouldn't have to import as much, and the Swedish market for organically grown products would increase, and farmers would be better of economically. With better support, a new and better trend would start off and automatically continue to grow. But now, it works the other way, according to the women. This, they say, is very much because food systems worldwide are controlled by big companies with focus on profit gain, driven by capitalistic forces. Individual and cultural images of the planet as Mother

Earth representing fertility and reproduction essential for our living and welfare is put in oblivion and ignored when the controlling powers perceive the nature and its functions differently. The women's critical view on the future also show their willingness to change it, which proves a belief in their capacity of doing so. Linking this to their own identity show how their position, regardless of potential obstacles, is perceived as enough powerful to create a change. Still, with strong gendered codes, agriculture becomes less flexible which complicates the development of sustainable agriculture, as well as future challenges such as environmental issues.

## 6.2. Critical Reflections

### 6.2.1. The Topic

Regarding the topic of choice, challenges within the delimitation of the topic has emerged during writing the thesis, and the topic can thus be questioned. With more knowledge and insight to the body of research regarding gender sensitive agriculture, a more precise, narrow and detailed thesis could have been conducted. Afterwards, the topic and the result has been developed at the expense of the researchers limited knowledge in a field much more complex than expected. This study, emphasizes some issues with gender inequality within agriculture and show some examples on how gendering can be manifested based on a few interviews in relation to context and theory. However, the preconditions for the study were somehow limited, and a more detailed and deeper analysis had required better prior knowledge.

The aim of the thesis was formulated broadly enough to bring insight to the research question. However, it could also, as well as the topic, have been more precise. Also, the research questions showed to be slightly broad and they turned out to be challenging to answer without being too complex. This connects with the topic, whose complexity should be questioned and therefore reflected upon much more before initiating the very thesis.

### 6.2.2. The Methodology

Having a narrative inquiry as research design makes the result and outcome very personal, individual and unique according to the interviewees' narratives. This somehow prevents anyone else to reconduct the study and get the same result. Still, the findings provide some information that can be uses in comparison with similar studies.

The methodology provided the researcher ample space to be analytical and to dig deep into the results. Therefore, the methods are considered to have been suitable for the aim. One critical

thought however, is that more interviews could be implemented in order to have a bigger sample and thus a greater representation of the findings. Also, a comparative study where men in a similar position were interviewed could have been interesting and would have given more information on the differences between men and women.

Farmer 4 and 5 were interviewed at the same time. On that account, there is an awareness that their answers may have been influenced by the other one's opinion and that their positions, thoughts and beliefs may have been affected due to the answers and very presence of the other. Further, it may also have contributed to a more pleasant climate and thus have had a positive effect on the interview as their answers and narratives have been more spontaneous in the relaxed conversation created by the fact that the two know each other well from earlier. Therefore, an awareness of the risks and/or potential of having a group interview led to more cautiousness during the analysis of the transcript as well as an attentiveness of potentially influenced answers. Still, the overall impression and conclusion of this specific interview is that even though it might have been a somewhat different outcome if the two had been interviewed separately, their answers appeared to be honest and their opinions came true authentically regardless of whether they agreed with one another or not. This, probably because the two had both really strong convictions and perceptions of what their position was on every issue, as was the case with most of interviewees.

## 7. Conclusion

In this thesis, the presence and impact of gendering within agriculture has been evaluated. Furthermore, it has been discussed in relation to perception of nature and some other factors influencing the results of the study. The result, as well as the analysis, linked to both the context and the theoretical framework provides broad and complex insights into the research questions. However, the analytical tools, together with previous research, have been used to further understand the motives behind the women's narratives, which therefore have resulted in complex conclusions. In order to concretize and clarify these conclusions, they are now reformulated, and following the structure of the research questions.

- How are gendered patterns in agriculture manifested according to the experience of women owning organic farms in Scania, in relation to their understanding of gender?

On farm level, the most evident process of gendering is within the interaction between men and women. Gendered patterns are many times manifested in the division of skills, labor and expectations. This becomes visible in the actual work where the woman often is taking biggest responsibility which spans several spheres. Also, where the division of labor is following gendered patterns in cases where partners run a farm together.

Another conclusion is that gender is done through creation of identity in how the women position and describe themselves. On one hand, the women challenge some norms as women owning farms. On the other hand, they live up to female-coded ideals on how women are in the approach and motives to do farming.

- How do these patterns affect the terms for women owning organic farms in Scania, considering the core themes in organic food systems: economic, environmental and social sustainability?

The women say that they do not allow any inequalities to affect them in their work. However, the analysis concludes that the agribusiness, conventional as organic, is imbued by gendering processes in the very structure, and this have an indirect impact on women and their work. A structure that makes it necessary for the vast majority of the women to have a complementary

activity to the farm. This need is partly linked to gendered structures which in turn adversely affects the conditions for organic farmers regarding economic sustainability.

- How does the perception of nature and ecology affect the motivation for women owning organic farms to conduct organic farming, considering that the number of female farmers is increasing in Sweden while farmers in general are decreasing?

The women's work is strongly driven by their conviction of "doing right" according to ecological principles, along with the other motives related to family, kids, economy/independency and preserving of the local community. Their view on nature is one of the main keys to their motivation of living up to ecological sustainability and that compensates for the backside of the profession, such as poor profitability and long working days. The farmers would not do farming if it could not be in an environmentally sustainable way. This can also be related to gendered structures in processes that include norms and ideals which affect identity creation. The gendered structure of the sector, and society, regarding expectations on how men and women are and what skills they possess, is both challenged and recreated.

To conclude, this study illustrates obstacles for agroecology and its sustainability aspects to develop due to gendering processes. This, since they recreate strong gendered structures, that also contributes to a conflict between conventional and organic agriculture because of their gendered representations within which certain practices amplifies certain gendered values. Also, subject positions within the farming systems are built on gendered codes that restricts women's and men's scope of action due to a smaller valuation of the female-coded ones. The clear division indicates a continuously negative association and marginalization of female coded values, no matter if it is men or women possessing them. This is nothing optimal for agroecology since it entails inflexibility of farming systems and thus increases the risk of sustainable agricultural development to diminish. Gendering processes implicates barriers for agroecology to be fulfilled, while undoing gender and increasing equality is an essential move towards its complete implementation.

## 7.1. Proposed Research

The topic of this study is necessary to investigate more in order to get deeper understanding of its complexity. Considerations for further research is to do a comparative study including both women and men, or to involve a larger group of women, to collect more data and thus increase

the credibility. It would be fruitful to further investigate the impact of certification regulations and policies, as it shows to be both constructive and destructive for small-scale farmers. How should certifications and policies be developed for this group of farmers? Further research could possibly focus on women owning conventional farms in order to study their experience of gender as well as their view on nature, similar to this study.

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# Appendix A. Context Review: Gendered Farming and Organic Agriculture

In this chapter, the thesis' context is formulated as a background and problem description to the aim and the research questions. The content of the chapter is selected considering the objective to emphasize that the topic needs to be studied in the light of several other matters in order to understand its impact on the agricultural sector, as well as its complexity that extends across several academic fields. It points out the fact that the number of Swedish farmers decreases in line with agriculture becoming more industrialized and globalized (Wästfelt & Eriksson, 2017). Also, that organic farming is becoming more common in line with the increasing demand for organic food, which is as a response and contest to conventional agriculture, and which subsequently is followed by new policies that tend to respect organic small-scale farmers' need more (Rydén, 2007). Organic small-scale farmers are still a minor group compared to conventional large-scale farmers (Jordbruksverket, 2017). Female-headed farms are an even smaller group, and there are not very much research made on this group in relation to organization and gender (Pettersson & Arora-Jonsson, 2009). Under what terms they are operating will thus be explained here to some extent. But first, a brief comparison of conventional and organic farming is described, followed by a summary of the development of Swedish agriculture.

## Conventional and Organic farming

To meet the world's demand for food, agriculture has become increasingly industrialized and mechanized (Altieri, 2009). Conventional farming methods imply, among other things, that monocultures are rather a rule than an exception. Such farming systems, with a simple crop rotation tends to impair the soil organic matter and can lead to soil fatigue with a serious lack of both essential nutrients and microorganisms (Pimentel *et al.*, 2005). A poor soil consecutively induces an increased need of off-farm inputs in terms of fertilizers that are not a natural part of the ecosystem. When conventional methods respond to the issue of poor soils by embracing a greater use of synthetic fertilizers and agrochemicals, negative consequences of environmental degradation such as biodiversity loss emerge (McIntyre, 2009). It also causes

social problems referring to health risks due to direct or indirect contact with chemicals (Rosset & Altieri, 1997).

The way that the agricultural sector is being managed is said to respond to the world's economic demands (McIntyre, 2009). Because as long as agriculture leads to a better economy, its management is being accepted disregarding its environmental or social impacts. Although, conventional agriculture depends more on capital investments compared to organic and agroecological agriculture (Rosset & Altieri, 1997). It is also important to notice that in line with an increased global demand for food, the production of organic food is also increasing (Alexandratos & Bruinsma, 2012).

Unlike conventional agriculture, organic farming systems aim for a cooperation with nature, i.e. the farmers adapt their work to the course of nature and ecosystems (Rosset & Altieri, 1997). For instance, some of the organic, and agroecological, farming methods that differs from conventional ones are: organic fertilizers instead of synthetic; mechanical weeding instead of chemical herbicides; less plowing; intercrops; cover crops; more complex crop rotation and farming including both livestock and crops. Some of these methods, such as the use of organic fertilizers and mixed farming, enhance the biodiversity in contrast to conventional management (Hole *et al.*, 2005). Additionally, agroecological farming tends to include more cooperation and engagement among farmers while conventional have a lower need of labor and therefore ignore the need of both farmers and their knowledge (Rosset & Altieri, 1997).

## Swedish agriculture – a brief history description

The development of Swedish agriculture is often divided into different eras and its history can be traced back to 4000 BCE, e.g. 6000 years back (Welinder *et al.*, 1998). From back then, we can find information about agriculture and farming when people change their lifestyle as nomads and hunter-gatherers to a more settled life as farmers with established cultivation plots and domesticated livestock. Every part in history has led to what we have today but in this thesis only some events and milestones that are relevant for the aim will be emphasized, starting from 1900 and more specifically the second half of the millennium during the formation of the Swedish welfare state.

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many farmers in Sweden shut down their business, meanwhile farms in the south instead converted into a more modern type of agriculture framed by technological reforms (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). Everywhere a more intensive livestock keeping also emerged. New knowledge continuously replaced traditional skills (which defies the

agroecological principles of co-creation of knowledge, see 2, chapter 4). According to Flygare et al (2003), this transformation also brought agrochemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers to the market. Due to fertilizers, farmers became less and less dependent on mixed farming with the interaction of both livestock and crop production (which also opposes another agroecological principle of synergies). Still, it was very welcomed by many since it helped to produce food for many people partly by bigger yields and reduced workload. The farms could become more intensive and specializing on certain crops. The use of agrochemicals increased during the whole century and the curve didn't change until the late 70s. But the trend of agrochemicals also varies between different nutrients and between geographical areas. Phosphorus and potassium were those substances whose use decreased most. The use of nitrogen, on the contrary, continued to increase until the 90s. Since it is harder to know proportions of nutrients in manure than in fertilizers, the increased use of fertilizers is of no surprise. Farmers could apply the correct amount in order to get bigger yields and improved profit. On the other hand, this trend led to nutrient leaching and eutrophication in nearby waterbodies. When environmental problems like this began to attract attention, the regulation for its use was also changed. Agricultural policies were developed to become more restrictive of how and when fertilizers should be spread on the fields. In connection with these regulations, the support for organic farming increased. Pesticides, herbicides and fungicides also helped farmers a lot when intensifying the agriculture. But, as a result of using agrochemicals without all necessary knowledge, the complex crop rotation got replaced by a simple one and new problems with more weeds and pests increased. Although, it was during this time when the number of farms decreased, e.g. three quarters, as the remaining ones became larger. The mechanization and all new technology improved the yields and provided a better profit for the farmers. Especially after the year of 1945, new machines got introduced such as milking machines (e.g. Sommestad, 1992) . This particular machine also contributed to a shift regarding whom was responsible for milking. Until now, it had been a work mainly managed by the women, which instead became more of a male activity when it got mechanized. Talking about technology and agriculture, it is something that has been studied from a gender perspective and several articles show a connection between masculinity, technology and machinery (e.g. Brandth, 1995, 2002; Saugeres, 2002) It was in the shadow of this transition and development, that farmers lost their jobs mainly due to machines replacing them (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). Although, the new technology facilitated and improved a lot of the farmers' working conditions also with electric light and fans inside the building. In line with bigger yields and improved production, the working hours decreased. Still, the need of employees decreased but the concept

of family farms got even more important. During this time, there were also major changes in the households, which facilitated domestic work. Freezers, refrigerators and electric cookers got introduced on the markets which above all improved storage and facilitated those types of preparation. Since the mechanization and industrialization, there have been basically two types of farming: many small family farms of agricultural labor and fewer big farming businesses with employees, which accounted for 70 and 30 % of the agricultural labor force respectively. The representation of family farms in Sweden has been large ever since. Regarding the succession order of businesses as well as land ownership, around 79 % of all farmers today have inherited the farm from a relative and the succession have almost invariably been characterized by a patrilineal inheritance irrespective of business type. Very often farmers with only daughters have waited for a son-in-law to take over the farm instead of seeing one of the daughters as the potential inheritor (ibid).

### Organic Farming in Sweden

The trends of organic farming first got introduced to Swedish agriculture in the 70s as a part of the environmental movement (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). From that point alternative, environment-friendly, farming methods developed such as biodynamic farming with more holistic perspectives as well as more concern about locally produced food and biodiversity. Still, the Biodynamic Organization in Järna was already founded in 1944 for supporting biodynamic farmers and spread information about certain methods. They are still active today, as well as other organizations connected to, and supporting, organic and alternative farming in Sweden. The biodynamic organization is, in turn, now connected to the Swedish association of Demeter International's organization that certifies biodynamic farming (Svenska Demeterförbundet). Organic Farmers Association, Ekologiska Lantbrukarna, is another organization that aims at improving opportunities and terms for organic farmers in Sweden (Ekologiska Lantbrukarna). The probably most known ecolabel in Sweden is the organization KRAV which develops rules for organic farming, animal husbandry etc. and provides certifications.

In Sweden, the proportion of organic farming in agriculture is modestly increasing, looking at statistics from 2005 (Jordbruksverket, 2017). In 2016, organic production comprised 18 % of the total agricultural land, including converted land and land during conversion<sup>4</sup>. In Scania, the equivalent number was around 7 % for the same year. The increased share of organic farming in Sweden is a response to consumers' positive attitude change towards a more

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<sup>4</sup> It requires approximately 2 years of organic management for arable land to be counted as organic.

sustainable food production as well as an increased willingness to buy and pay more for organic products (Rydén, 2007). The consumption of organic food is logically connected to the supply, and vice versa, but existing statistics of consumption are still relevant to get a perception of the market and changes over time. Since the reference year of 2004, the consumption of organic food has steadily increased (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2017). In 2016, 7.9 % of the total sale of foods and non-alcoholic beverage were comprised by organic products. Swedish consumers tend to find fruits as the most preferable product to buy organic, and it comprises 19.6 % of organic sales. The second largest group of organic sales is fish, 14.4 %, despite the low supply compared to other groups. Fruits and fish are then followed by coffee, tea and chocolate beverage (13.1 %); vegetables (12.3 %); oils and fats (12.2 %) and milk, cheese and eggs (11.0 %). Meat, which is stated as one of the greatest environmental impacts only comprises 3.2 % of organic sales. The groups that provides the largest supply of organic products are oils and fats (14.1 %); coffee, tea and chocolate beverage (14.1); fruits (13.6 %) and vegetables (13.2 %) (ibid).

### Attitudes and Behavior Toward Organic Food

Regarding purchasing, and attitudes toward organic food products, previous research show a difference between men and women, concluding that women have a more positive attitude of organic products and are more likely to buy it (Davies *et al.*, 1995; Magnusson *et al.*, 2001; Lockie *et al.*, 2002; Ureña *et al.*, 2007; Bellows *et al.*, 2010). Although, some research show that there is no, or only a small, difference between men and women (Wandel & Bugge, 1997; Thompson, 1998). However, the body of research coherently indicates that there is a complex diversity of opinion and attitude toward organic food reliant on other interconnected factors such as “cultural practice, tradition, ideology, values, preferences, resources, and the fundamental place of food behavior in daily life and family structure, and in accordance with education, age, and income” (Bellows *et al.*, 2010). One of the biggest reasons of going organic is usually found in consumers’ increased environmental concerns due to an overall increased awareness of the destruction of ecosystems, pollution, natural resources crisis etc. (Basha *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, many people also choose to buy organic products because of health reasons and nutritional value (Padel & Foster, 2005; Basha *et al.*, 2015). Among people focusing on a healthy lifestyle related to diet choice, women are more concerned than men (Fagerli & Wandel, 1999; Beardsworth *et al.*, 2002). Apart from health reasons, the reason why women tend to be more positive about organic food may also be connected to their bigger concern regarding

environmental issues in contrast to men (Wandel & Bugge, 1997; Beardsworth *et al.*, 2002). Women are also more likely to be the ones taking responsibility of buying and making food, as well as taking care of the family and provide a more nutritious life style for both themselves and their families (Beardsworth *et al.*, 2002; Padel & Foster, 2005; Bellows *et al.*, 2010). But as with other gendered norms, women as the greater consumer of organic food can originate from socially constructed perceptions of masculine and feminine identities (Fagerli & Wandel, 1999; Beardsworth *et al.*, 2002; Cairns & Johnston, 2015). The arguments saying that women are more responsible for nursing the family and themselves with healthy food, and more engaged with environmental issues, might be a consequence of these norms, perceptions and expectations, and can be referred to the feminine role of being more caring, also connected to the gendered division of labor where women are more responsible for the reproductive work (Chiappe & Butler Flora, 1998; Wells & Gradwell, 2001).

The Swedish context of consumers' and attitude toward organic food is slightly similar to the above-mentioned complex motives. Women tend to be more positive about organic food than men (Magnusson *et al.*, 2001). Swedish consumers in general also consider health, nutrition, together with product quality, as the main reasons for buying organic. The environmental aspect is not as highly considered as the health aspect (Shepherd *et al.*, 2005). Further, Swedish consumers are getting more concerned about animal welfare. Thus, they prefer to buy, and pay extra, for food where GMO is banned in the production, also for eggs from free-range hens (Carlsson *et al.*, 2005), which are some of the criteria for organic certification (KRAV, 2017).

### Reasons and Requirements for Converting

From the agroecological perspective, converting needs to be done step by step by individual farmers. Gliessman (2015) has stated a few reasons to why farmers usually convert to a more sustainable farming system. He points out the increase of energy costs, conventional productions' low profit margins and the successful development of methods, practices and tools that are used within organic farming. Also, he mentions the overall increased concern for environmental degradation and care for food quality and health. Finally, he stresses the importance of successful organic farmers as examples for others who consider a conversion.

A study made in Canada, show that farmer's with large arable land are less likely to convert based on the assumption that it is harder to convert bigger fields, due to the change of applied methods and labor that it requires (Khaledi *et al.*, 2010). The farmers in their study indicate that the transaction cost is the biggest barrier of converting. Another study, (Lauwere *et al.*, 2004),

points out certain ideals as one specific reason to convert, along with the motivation of working more in symbiosis with nature. The farmers in the study also emphasized the importance of not using agrochemicals and to be less harmful to nature in general. However, some farmers expressed a concern regarding decreased productivity as a reason for not converting, as well as a skepticism towards the efficiency of organic farming methods. Padel (2001) has conducted a study on previous research that includes motives of a conversion. These are shortly formulated as: motives regarding soil condition; livestock health; economic reasons; family health and wellbeing; food quality; environmental concerns etc. (Padel, 2001:46). Within the Swedish context, the primarily reason for converting lies within an economic interest (Cahlin *et al.*, 2008). This is accompanied by the motive of not using agrochemicals in order to be more environmentally friendly.

On the other hand, one reason of not converting is general attitudes and norms regarding organic farming, which is connected to traditional methods and traditional farming culture. Some concluding remarks in the study of Cahlin *et al.* (2008) are based on interviews with consultants within organic production. According to them, some farmers feel uncomfortable converting based on the concern of being placed outside the norm, which many times is conventional farming. This can change if there already are other organic farmers encouraging them. Other reasons are the soil organic matter, as well as the concern regarding lower profit gain caused by potentially lower productivity, which is similar to conclusions in the study by Lauwere *et al.* (2004). Many times, a conversion is also a matter of changing investments that has already been made by the farmers which is one barrier of converting (Cahlin *et al.*, 2008).

The choice of converting to organic farming is often followed by, not only different methods and techniques, but also another kind of administrative work due to requirements of documentation (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund, 2017). This requirement is also stated by Cahlin *et al.* (2008) as one concern among farmers considering a conversion. Being organic is often supported by being certified, and labelling is mandatory if one wants to sell the products as organic or to have the right to receive subsidies (Livsmedelsverket, 2018). In Sweden, organic farmers must follow the rules of EU organic certification in order to sell the products as organic (Jordbruksverket, 2018). In addition, Swedish farmers can choose to be certified by other Swedish certificate bodies, such as KRAV. Certification together with policy falls within the scope of the last point of the agroecological principles of land and natural resources governance. Certification and labelling exist for all parts in the food chain, to be transparent and trustworthy for everyone included (Jordbruksverket, 2018). Products are supposed to be traceable, farmers

should receive credit for what they do and consumers have the right to know what they pay for. To fulfill this, certification bodies are a third, independent, part controlling the products (ibid).

## Representation in Swedish Agriculture

From 1951 until the last turn of the century, the number of farm owners have decreased from 370 000 to 77 000 (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). Still, what we don't know for sure is how many people participated in agriculture as employees, and what we do know is that agricultural statistics are rarely gender neutral. Female farmers who married into business were excluded from the official statistics of employment until 1965. The change of how to keep these statistics led to a big statistical difference and misleading information if not knowing its background. Since women have often worked both with farming activities and household work they have rarely been accounted as actual workers or employees, rather as a flexible helper managing her responsibilities as a farm wife. Even so, during the years of agricultural modernization, the remaining farms have almost without any exception been operated by both husband and wife due to the dependent interconnection of domestic work and farm work (ibid).

The majority of people owning farm businesses today in Sweden are still men (Pettersson & Arora-Jonsson, 2009; Andersson, 2014), but the numbers showing the proportions of male-headed and female-headed firms are also misleading, depending on several factors. Referring to contemporary data on men's and women's involvement in agriculture, one can get the impression of women's participation as more present during the last decades in contrast to earlier years, although that is not the case (Sommestad, 1995). As mentioned, one common misconception due to these statistics is that women running farms together with their husbands have not been showed in numbers since the business type only allows one owner, which very often is the man (Pettersson & Arora-Jonsson, 2009). As opposed to this, women are in fact, and have been, very much present in the agricultural sector. In Sweden, 40 % of all people employed within the agricultural sector are women (Jordbruksverket, 2011). The participation of women in the Swedish agriculture has always been crucial for family farms and family incomes (Sommestad, 1995), this, not least because that women have had two jobs (which many times have resulted in longer workdays for women than men) (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). Female farmers' work on and off farms have had a crucial impact on rural families' wealth, yet these women's status within the family businesses as well as in the private sphere has varied due to, among other things, geographical location and socio-economic class (Sommestad, 1995). It is important to note that when operating agricultural firms, there are several fields in which one

can work. When it comes to family businesses men and women often have different tasks and responsibilities. Quite often, women are the ones working with complementary jobs connected to the farm such as farm tourism and farm shops to improve the family's income (Flygare *et al.*, 2003). There has always been a gendered distribution and division of tasks and activities within agriculture. According to Flygare *et al.* (2003), the division of labor in 2000 were quite similar to the division one hundred years earlier. Women alone responsible for tasks where around 90 % laundry; 84 % cooking; 80 % dishwashing followed by 73 % poultry keeping; 72 % daily purchase to household; 65 % taking care of children; 60 % accounting and administration and so on. When it comes to more typical farm related tasks women alone responsible where 1 % haymaking; 3 % ploughing; 4 % fertilizing; 9 % harvesting of grains and 10 % harrowing. The reason why tasks are divided by men and women, and why those often follow a certain pattern can be explained by the different roles and expectations grounded in a gendered nature (which will be described more further ahead). Yet, these numbers would be rather different when measuring women's involvement and participation in tasks assisting their husbands. The patterns can also be explained by the fact that men in general have showed a tendency to rather work together with other men than with women. Therefore, men preferably ask other men for help and women are thus referred to domestic work, complementary jobs and/or more feminine coded jobs as taking care of the animals (when applicable) (*ibid.*).

Regarding contemporary gendered distribution in southern Sweden, it has showed that there are bigger inequalities between men and women regarding access to land and agricultural resources compared to the rest of the country (Andersson, 2014). This has, in a negative sense, an effect on women's ability of operating farms in the same way as men. Taking into account its impact, of which it becomes interesting to look at female farm owners' motivation considering the awareness that their presence is increasing in Sweden (Jordbruksverket, 2011). Pettersson & Arora-Jonsson (2009) have gathered researched on women's motivation to become farm owners and their reason for having complementary activities to their farms. They point out the gendered expectation on men as the typically farmer as a problem, because it results in a bigger concern among men to start a business due to their fear of failing which is not associated with the stereotypical picture (Pettersson & Arora-Jonsson, 2009). Another conclusion, from bringing together articles from Spain, the US, Sweden etc., is that women seem to start a business that, for them, is important to their local environment and that they thus have the community in mind as well as a desire to inspire others through what they do. Women's traditional position as the caring one, responsible for household work and to take care of the children, also affect their way of running a farm business. This, to facilitate for themselves by

operating the business so that they can combine it with household work. The combination is visible in how they develop the business carefully, without taking too big financial risks or the risk of failing in the maintenance of the social responsibility. Another motivation is to increase one's income and to be more independent, in some countries due to the difficulties of getting an employment. Some studies also show that women get much more motivated to start a business when they have ideals and other women motivating them, as well as education and consulting with a gender perspective. To summarize Pettersson's and Arora-Jonsson's report (2009:45-48), the motives for women to start a business are: connected with the responsibility for family and children; economic motives; encouragement and ideals; to preserve the local community. On the other hand, the obstacles are pointed out as: responsibility for household work; negative attitudes from others; limited profit gain; and lack of gender sensitive counseling and education (pp. 52-54). Here, the complexity is clear, as several of the motives for women to become farm owners, are the same things that might prevent them from doing it. The responsibility in the household prevents them from starting a business, and if they do, it affects the way of how it is done. However, negative attitudes from other people can be less valued if the encouragement is bigger. Then, the small incomes may be worth the effort as long as the women feel more independent.

In an article by Andersson (2016), relations on family farms have been studied within the light of, among other things, gender. Here, women have referred to the farm work as both a choice and a lifestyle. Women on farms, and their responsibilities, are here described as rather flexible and diverse compared to men's, since it spans over several spheres, including the household. Also, that the division of labor is following gendered patterns especially due to power relations on the farms where women's labor often is subordinated to the men's work.

Access to essential resources and opportunities to run a farming business is not only about land and machinery. It also involves access to information, which sometimes can be forgotten in the discussion even though it plays an important role. This is brought up in this thesis since it has shown to be gendered, similarly to the other access to fruitful resources for farmers (Leckie, 1996). Leckie (1996) emphasizes that this is partly a result from early socialization and that information is not being given to young girls in the same way as farmers often give it to their sons. Because of the way children are being raised differently due to their sex, women quite often lack access to the same social networks as their male counterparts. A potential interpretation could therefore be that this still is an existing phenomenon, even 20 years after that article, considering the fact that farms still are inherited from father to son in most of the cases (Flygare *et al.*, 2003).

The gendered distribution and participation are not only a case within a Swedish context. It is a worldwide phenomenon and today's agriculture is a result of historical events framed by technological changes, less labor-intensive methods which replace farmers and an increased need of supplementary jobs outside the farms (e.g. Sachs, 1983). The Swedish, as well as the global, economically based trend of less and bigger farms are also affecting women's agricultural work and participation as it displaces farmers in general (most likely smallholders) in line with the traditional structures of a patrilinear inheritance from father to son. Ownership and inheritance are two of the most common things to observe when valuating gender equality, especially since it tells much about men and women's influence, status and power as well as cultural, traditional and social structures in a society.

As mentioned in previous chapter, responsible governance is of big importance for farmers and the terms under which they are working. But it does not only have to do with certification bodies paying attention to farmers circumstances. It is also about agricultural organizations and their ability to direct their focus towards both women and men, and the existing gendered nature. For example, the Federation of Swedish Farmers (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund, LRF), and their branch that focus on economic and legal advice for farmers is said to be male dominated (Näringsdepartementet, 2004). In a report from the Swedish ministry of finance (2004), this is highlighted as a problem that maintains gender roles and gender inequality in the sector. This is the case in basically every agricultural organization, even though the female representation is increasing which might lead to a change in its structure and work culture. Still, despite the increased participation of women in agricultural organization, including LRF, the share of women as decision-makers is not increasing as fast.

Referring back to the unequal ownership and inheritance, affected by, and affecting, patriarchal structures, women's access to farms are most commonly when they marry a male farmer (Näringsdepartementet, 2004). Other potential scenarios can be that they only have sisters or that they inherit the farm after their husband has died. The book from Näringsdepartementet (2004:211) also refers to an article by Djurfeldt et al (1992) that concludes the following statistics on distribution of ownership between men and women:

- The farm was owned by the man and the woman moved there from another city/village (41 %)
- The farm was owned by the man and the woman moved there from the same city/village (13 %)
- The farm has been acquired through purchase and the woman comes from the same city/village (14 %)

- The farm was owned by the woman and the man moved there from another city/village (10 %)
- The farm has been acquired through purchase and the man comes from the same city/village (7 %)

These facts are partly the explanation of why the participation in agriculture is so gendered. The reason why it looks like this is not because gender inequality has entered society randomly by chance, or because of innate perceptions of what's male and female. It is partly created because of unequal laws and regulations in society that even though they're abandoned "on paper".. For example: equal rights to inheritance for women and men was introduced in 1845; unmarried women over the age of 25 can be tied to the age of majority if accepted in court by 1858 (but this is repealed if she gets married); married woman is entitled to decide over her own income in 1874; working women may not be fired due to marriages, pregnancy or childbirth in 1939; all professions are open for women in 1983 (Näringsdepartementet, 2004). These changes might sound strange today because many of us take their meaning for granted, especially in Sweden. Even the years might seem like a long time ago, but in fact it is quite recent if one count in number of generations. The laws and regulations show that change takes time and that our way of living is very much affected by, and dependent on, governance and politics.

The distribution of labor is also gendered and has changed during the years by following a so-called masculinization process (Näringsdepartementet, 2004), whose influence on identities is explained into more detail in the next section. This process, and its meaning have indirectly decided the distribution of chores among men and women due to masculine and feminine coded tasks created by gender norms and a female subordination.

## Gendered Identities Within Agriculture

In agriculture, as in many other sectors, there are predetermined roles to which people are expected to undertake (Liepins, 1998). Individuals are ascribed particular characteristics associated with their biological gender identity. Several studies emphasize the interconnection of gender and rural development, also more specifically the gendered nature of agriculture which divides farming and farm related tasks in masculine and feminine, more suitable for men and women respectively (Little, 1987; Little & Austin, 1996; Chiappe & Butler Flora, 1998; Little & Panelli, 2003; Brandth & Haugen, 2016b). Women within agriculture, or within the rural context, are very much affected by the chores they are addressed, such as reproductive

labor (Little & Austin, 1996). Cassel & Pettersson (2015), address the typical identification of a Swedish farm-woman as one with traditional farming clothes with a feminine touch, preferably braids, a head scarf etc. These attributes are bound to a caring and nurturing persona who is primarily in charge over household tasks but strongly and diligently handles their assigned activities on the farm. The traditional rural gender identities are disturbed when women and men share the workloads and when boundaries of gendered division of labor become unclear. Cassel & Pettersson also stress the complex identification of rural femininity that occurs when women not only are responsible for household activities or the so-called feminine task but also are in charge as business managers. Something happens with norms and expectations when women themselves are in charge; it can either reinforce traditional identities or challenge them, sometimes simultaneously (Cassel & Pettersson, 2015). But even though the gendered roles in farming are challenged through women as business managers, the male and female identified labor tend to stay the same, at least in the context of farm tourism due to expectations of the idyllic image of a rural life and farming (Pettersson & Heldt Cassel, 2014). In an article on farm tourism (Brandth & Haugen, 2010), one male farmer expresses his thoughts on tasks involving talking to visitors or people calling the farm as a task more suitable for women. Pettersson & Cassel (2014) too describe a pattern of this matter, namely that women in their study were the ones responsible for the tasks and activities involving contact with customers. As if women naturally are better at it.

The concept of gendered agriculture is mostly seen as an overall socially constructed phenomenon. It may differ depending on geographical locations and cultural and economic context (Chiappe & Butler Flora, 1998) as well as it may change over time (Brandth & Haugen, 2016b). Yet, what is classified as feminine usually comes from the generally common idea of women's maternal, equated with protective and sympathetic, character based on their ability to give birth (Chiappe & Butler Flora, 1998). This consequently draws the conclusion that men, and what is referred to as masculine, are the opposite and that they therefore are aimed for other activities. One of the general assumptions is that working with agriculture at first hand is an area for primarily men (Brandth, 2002). The body of research (Brandth, 2002), regarding gendering in agriculture also show that the gendered division of labor changes over time due to changes in the agribusiness. When agriculture develops regarding technology, culture and structure, subject positions also change accordingly. The position of women as assisting farmers' wives, in contrast to the masculine male farmer, has been studied in the light of "patriarchy, property, commodity, production, sex roles, biologism, tradition, agrarian ideology and more" (Brandth, 2002:195) As mentioned earlier, milking used to be a women chore but

became more of a male activity when milking machines got introduced. This can be explained by previous research on rural masculinity connected to technology and how machinery in marketing addresses men as the main users (Brandth, 1995). Thus, the social construction of femininity and masculinity is also shaped when media implements technology as a masculine area for male farmers. In her article “Rural Masculinity in Transition – Gender Images in Tractor Advertisements”, Brandth (1995) addresses how gender codes changes with technological changes and that these codes are very much connected to how it is being marketed in advertising, especially the construction of hegemonic masculinity. What is coded as masculine has gone from heavy manual work to more psychological work with characteristics similar to engineers. Still, these two definitions of masculinity are nevertheless recognized in society. The latter definition has not entirely replaced the former. It seems like characteristics of what is masculine within farming is clearer than of those categorized as feminine, maybe due to the overall androcentric culture of agriculture. Still, femininity can partly be explained through defining masculinity and what it is not (since they often are contradicted to each other).

### Gendered Roles and Positions within Alternative Farming

Hall & Mogyorody (2007) argue that gender equality may be more significant, both in theory and practice, among farmers practicing organic methods, than within conventional agriculture. Although, this statement does not equate organic farming with gender equality, but rather refers to the idea that the mindset among organic farmers often takes more account of social roles and power relations. It depends on the mentality among farmers and rural communities of how much they include social aspects in their work, which after all does not belong to the norm:

...the gender potential of organic farming may not be realized unless there is a more concerted effort by committed alternative organic farmers and consumers to work to preserve organic farming, not only as an alternative agricultural movement, but also as a social movement concerned with gender equality (Hall & Mogyorody, 2007).

In spite of the limited amount of scientific research on men's and women's attitude of organic farming and its gendered nature, several existing studies show that tasks and activities in both conventional and organic farming are still masculine- and feminine-coded (Chiappe & Butler Flora, 1998; Wells & Gradwell, 2001; Brandth, 2002; Trauger, 2004; Sachs & Alston, 2010; Sumner & Llewelyn, 2011).

More blurred gender stereotypes and increased empowerment among women in organic farming and sustainable food production do often emerge as a result to greater influence in decision-making processes as well as ownership (Trauger, 2004). Trauger (2004) notes that sustainable agriculture provides better conditions for farming women regarding decision-making and access to resources. Women, in the study of Trauger, also identify themselves as farmers, instead of farmwives, which is not always the case mainly due to traditional norms and even more rare in conventional agriculture. This identity, as a farmer, were also spread to public spaces in the community. Partially therefore, Trauger's conclusion includes the statement that this self-perception and recognition is one of the motivations for women to go organic. Yet, similarly to Hall & Moggyrody (2007), sustainable agriculture does yet not automatically put women in an equal position with their male counterparts. Despite women's greater influence in decision-making on organic farms, the gendered division of labor tends to be similar in organic and conventional farming (Trauger, 2004), especially in the northern countries (Farnworth & Hutchings, 2009). Also, in the context of organic, and other alternative farming methods, there are feminine and masculine coded fields that emerge while reviewing existing scientific research. Wells and Gradwell's study (2000), on gender and resource management in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Iowa (US), reflects the image of women as more caring than men but conclude that alternative farming, as CSA, is more equal than conventional regarding gender (Wells & Gradwell, 2001). A female farmer in the study explains that farming women are more tender in their way of doing certain activities (in this case manual weeding), based on their idea of how a garden should be managed, namely in a caring way. In line with this, another woman from the same study expressed her thoughts of men being more concerned about the business part of farming in contrast to the "gardening" women. As stressed by Chiappe and Butler Flora (1998), the feminine characteristics are often based on women's childbearing role, which is referred to even in the study by Wells and Gradwell. The reference gives women a more nurturing persona even when it comes to food production. The study also mentions a woman's explanation of the presence of women in CSA as an advantage since conventional farming involves mainly men. She points out that women's greater participation makes men used to work with not only men, and therefore their attitude and mentality becomes more cooperative and respectful. Still, the socially constructed gender norms are clear in other growers' description of big equipment for farming as more appealing among male farmers: "The women are more likely to do the gardens and markets while the men are doing the big farming" (Wells & Gradwell, 2001). The masculine picture of farming becomes evident in the words "He has a farmer attitude. I have a gardener attitude" (Wells & Gradwell, 2001:110).

Trauger (2004) formulates the same phenomenon in her article, of that the mechanized work is aimed for the men. The overall conclusion of the interviews in Wells and Gradwell's study is that gardening is more feminine while farming is more masculine, despite some very few exceptions. Also, the statement that women are primarily the ones taking the initiative towards using organic methods, which is the overall conclusion regarding how gender impacts the transition from conventional farming to organic is that women are more likely to go in the organic and sustainable direction (Davidson & Freudenburg, 1996; Burton *et al.*, 1999; Karami & Mansoorabadi, 2008). It is also stated, within the Danish context, that women generally prefer organic farming instead of conventional (Pedersen & Kjaergard, 2004). In the article by Pedersen and Kjaergard (2004), women who do organic farming are interviewed, and the researchers emphasize these women's view on what they do as something more holistic than just farming. They write, in their conclusion that these women value the lifestyle that comes with farming on levels embracing both health concerns, spiritual aspects, animal welfare, environmental sustainability etc. Another study by Burton et al. (1999) show that among both men and women, people with an environmental concern and with consideration of food security are more likely to embrace organic farming methods (Burton *et al.*, 1999).

Wells and Gradwell (2001) claim that CSA is more equal than conventional farming and that gender stereotypes are a bit more softened. In contrast to the masculine coded conventional agriculture, growers within alternative farming methods in Trauger's article (2004) tend to focus more on the social, community-based and ecological aspects of their work:

“Men think women like sustainable agriculture because they are nurturing, but women like sustainable agriculture because they can do the work’...The reason women farmers find a home in sustainable agriculture has more to do with the socialization of work skills and knowledge in patriarchal communities, than any predetermined relationship between women as nurtures and a supposedly ‘kinder, gentler’ agriculture.” (Trauger, 2004)

As the body of research show, there is a gendered nature of organic farming. In this research, whether these socially constructed norms and codes are an obstacle or an opportunity to the development of organic farming is ought to be analyzed.

### Farmers' Identities and Relations with Nature

This far, previous research has been presented as it stresses gender norms and expectations on women and men. These norms and expectations affect the creation of identity among people.

Partly how society in general expect women and men to be, but also how individuals identify themselves. Also, general expectations do not only focus on people's gender, but also on our occupation and lifestyle. Therefore, it is of interest to include some of the research made on how farmers see themselves and how their personal identity is connected with their occupation. This, to further understand the results from this thesis and to get a better insight in why the farmers in this study answer as they do.

The former Ministry of Agriculture (Jordbruksdepartementet) (now Näringsdepartementet), let publish a book about the Swedish agricultural and forestry sector from a gender equality perspective (Näringsdepartementet, 2004). In the report the author stresses problems of identification and gendering, where gender equality within the sectors is measured by female representation; distribution of income; ownership and inheritance; and informal obstacles and structures. Even in this report, the inequality between men and women within the agricultural sector very much comes from socially constructed norms but is also a result from structural oppression of women which in turn is based on the further and therefore has shaped a vicious circle hard to break. One of the consequences of this is that women, farmers or not, don't identify themselves with someone doing certain chores or behaving in a certain way, of what is generally seen as masculine and manly. This phenomenon then prevents women to enter some fields understood as "male spheres" and can be additionally one explanation of why there are fewer female farmers than male farmers.

There are many more things, apart from gender norms and identification, affecting a farmer's decision making, and the primary factors has been categorized by Nordström Källström from the Swedish Board of Agriculture as; the economic situation; agricultural policies; work situation and; service and infrastructure (Nordström Källström, 2002). This is formulated in an article that was made on behalf of the Swedish Board of Agriculture (among others) within a project on EU level led by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In the same article, which is dealing mainly with closures of agricultural enterprises, farmers identity in relation to their occupation is studied and many times mentioned as a lifestyle more than just a profession. Nordström Källstrom (2002, chapter 5.2.) categorizes farmers' motives of becoming farmers in the following themes:

- "The so-called freedom" (to have freedom in the sense of being your own, but still controlled by weather, supply and demand, and agricultural policies).
- "The farmer in harmony with nature" (to be a part of the nature and work with it)
- "The entrepreneur" (to be creative and independent in everything you do when running your own business).

The second theme “The farmer in harmony with nature” in which farmers are being described as “managers of nature” (naturförvaltare), is formulated more as a view on farmers that other people have rather than a description made by the actual farmers in the study. Still, the author writes that connections can be made between the farmers own words and the theme even though it is not directly expressed by them. Clearly, farmers can also be the ones neglecting environmental policies even though they are so-called managers of nature. Solely because one work with nature or livestock, doesn't mean that one does it the best way possible. One reason for this, according to Philip Lowe (1997) (which is referred to by Nordström Källström 2002), is that when farmers consider themselves as managers over something they can also choose freely how to conduct their job. Even more so since they are not the ones taking part in the decision-making regarding policies and regulations (Lowe, 1997).

The article initially describes farmers as a homogenous group but explains further how very different farmers and their motives can be, as well as their perspectives of farming as a part of their personal identity. Therefore, it is important not to generalize such a large profession without seeing the individuals behind the eventual claims. The article includes the result of a study where the researcher highlights farmers identity and its connection to where they come from, since people's choices must be studied within their right context. Geographical anchorage can say very much about why people reason and act like they do. This is of course something to consider even in this study. Also, continuity and independency, which are the words used to represent a farmer's identity according to Nordström Källström referring to Gunnarsdotter (1999).

# Appendix B. Interview Letter

Hi N.N.!

My name is Kajsa Andersson, I'm 26 years old, and I'm reading the last semester at the Masters Programme of Agroecology at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp.

Now in the spring semester it is time for me to write my degree project, which I have chosen to do within the framework of gender research and sustainable cultivation. Since I come from a family of farms (?), I have early explored how both my parents and grandparents have worked, and how they have distributed the work between themselves and being responsible for different parts of the business. Therefore, during my years of study, I have chosen to focus more and more on these two areas, as they inspire me a lot. I have also realized that much of the existing research is primarily based on male farmers' perspectives and that women's experiences and perspectives are largely lacking. My purpose is therefore to do an interview study of women's own stories and experiences of owning and operating organic farms. I am interested in women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in organic farming, focusing on economic, social and environmental aspects.

I have been searching for women who run ecological farms in Scania, thus finding your business. Since your business seems very interesting and relevant for my study, I wonder if you would consider to participate in an interview? Your experiences within the industry would be an important contribution to my work as well as to the knowledge about organic farming in Sweden – something that in a long run also could contribute to the industry's development by exploring its barriers and opportunities.

The interviews are scheduled to take place in March or April, at a point that suits you best. The interview will take about an hour and involve the main issues of the work on gender in agriculture as well as motivations to follow organic principles of organic farming. With your consent, I will record the interviews, as it will help me in my analysis and make the reflection of your story more accurate.

Your participation is of course completely voluntary and consent to participate is expressed after you have obtained all the necessary information about the study. You may also cancel your participation at any time.

The completed work will be presented in a written report and orally through a presentation at SLU Alnarp. The written work will be published in SLU's database of student work and will be available for the public. You can of course get the completed work, if you wish.

I will contact you again within the next week to answer any questions and see if you are interested in participating in the study. I truly hope that you have the interest and opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,

Kajsa Andersson

Email address:

Phone number:

# Appendix C. Informed Consent Letter

Informed consent to participate in an interview for the study: **Gender, Nature and Small-Scale Farming** – *women's narratives about gender and their view on nature in relation to its impact on organic farms.*

- I have been informed of the purpose and the methods of the study.
  - I have been informed that my participation is voluntary.
  - I have been informed of my right to cancel my participation at any time.
- 
- I allow audio recording for transcripts.
  - I allow audio recording if the file is deleted after transcription.
  - I do not allow audio recording but personal notes are fine.

Interviewees' signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name clarification: \_\_\_\_\_

Place and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Kajsa Andersson's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name clarification: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix D. Interview Guide I

<b>1. Initial information</b>
Introduction to the study
Voluntariness
Recording
The interviewee's right to not answer and to end the interview at any time.
Use of material

<b>2. Background information</b>
Would you like to start by telling a little about yourself, your background and how you ended up here?
- For how long time have you been working with farming?
- Why did you start working with farming?
Have you ever worked on somebody else's farm?
- How did you experience that? / why not?
- Why?
How would you describe the most important difference between working on somebody else's farm and having one of your own?

<b>3. The company</b>
Could you give an introduction to your business?
What do you grow?
- Cash crop?
- Why?
- Livestock?
What are your distribution channels?
- Which one is the most important one?
- Do you wish to sell your products differently?
- Why?
- Are there any obstacles of doing this?
Do you have a lot of direct contact with your customers?
- Is this important to you for any specific reason? / would you like to have it?
- Why?
Would you tell about the reason of why you started your own business?
How would you describe your prerequisites to start up?
- Did you experience any obstacles or challenges when starting?
- Do you think your conditions of starting and running your business would have been different if you were a man? How?
- How did you experience your access to important resources? (land, machinery, labor, support, plant material, knowledge etc.)
- Do you experience that your access to resources are different today?
- If yes, in what way?
Do you experience that you are dependent on inputs from outside?
- What resources?
- Are you interested in being more independent?
- What are the obstacles, if any?
- What would you like to change?

<b>4. Organic farming</b>
Why did you choose organic farming and not conventional?
- What do you think are the biggest / most important differences?
- When / Why did you start to be interested in organic farming?
- What in your life do you think has contributed the most to your interest in organic farming? (events, people, etc.)
- What factors/aspects have been most important to you regarding your choice of farming type?

What, for you personally, weighs heavier: to grow according to organic principles or to grow in general? → why?
What organic farming methods do you practice?
- Why did you choose these methods?
- Is there anything you would like to change regarding your methods?
- Is yes, is there any obstacle to do so?
- What is your opinion of new techniques in farming? → traditional methods?
- What kind of method do you prefer? Why?
How did you get the knowledge you have today about farming and different methods?
- Where do you primarily seek new information? Why?
- Have you been thinking about further develop your knowledge in organic farming through courses etc? / do you wish to learn more?
- Has your work and farming impacted your lifestyle outside the farm, beyond your work? If yes, in what way?
How has your view on food changed since you began to grow on your own?
How do you think about environmental issues today?
- Has this changed since you started growing organic?

How much of your total income come from your farm?
- What other sources of income do you have in your household?
- How important is the economy in relation to your ability to grow organic?
How much of your time do you spend on the company? (e.g. hours per week etc.)
- Do you consider this time proportional to the income it generates?
- How much time do you spend on complementary activities?
- What activities on the farm requires most time?
- Do you wish the time distribution to be different? How?

How do you perceive the trends of today's agriculture? (larger farms, fewer farmers, conventional, male, female etc.)
- Do you think this trend has influenced your choices of how to operate your farm?

<b>5. The Organisation</b>
Could you describe your role at the farm?
- How do you feel about the role as a leader?
- How do you think your position as owner/leader in the business has affected you as a person?
How is the work organized on the farm?
- Who are involved in the work?
- How are the workloads and different activities distributed?
- Who decides how the distribution of labor will be?
- How is the decision-making and responsibility for the farm divided?
Could you describe how you combine farm work and household work?
Have you experiences, or do you experience, specific expectations for women in agriculture?
- How are these expectations manifested?
- How do you feel about these expectations?
- Have these expectations influenced you in any way in your work?

Do you feel that there are other/special expectations for men in agriculture?
- How are these expectations manifested?
- How do you feel about these expectations?
- Is there, according to you, a need for a change regarding these expectations?
Do you feel that there is a specific distribution of labor for women and men respectively? If yes, what do you think this depends on?
- How do you feel about this distribution?
- How do you think this has affected you in your work?
Do you cooperate with other growers?
- For what purpose?
- How do you choose your collaborations?
- In what way is this important to you?

Are you a member of any organization associated with agriculture? Why? /why not?
How do you perceive the potential support available for you as an organic farmer and smallholder regarding advice and consulting?
How do you experience the potential financial support available for you?
How do you experience that you as a women and business owner is being treated by other farmers and people within agriculture?
- Do you think it would have been different if you were a man? If yes, in what way?
- Do you think that it should be different? How?
- Has this attitude changed over time? How?
- What do you think it depends on?

How do you see your business today, do you have any current wishes/plans for any change?
If we look forward, could you tell how you see the future of your business and its development?
- What conditions are required for you to be able to fulfil the plans and dreams you have of your farm?

# Appendix E. Interview Guide II (Final version)

## Initial information

Introduction to the study

Voluntariness

Recording

The interviewee's right to not answer and to end the interview at any time.

Use of material

Would you like to start by telling a little about yourself?

Why did you choose to start your own business from the very beginning?

Have you previously worked with cultivation in any other context?

Would you like to describe your experiences of being a business owner?

Expectations?

Organization?

Cooperation?

Leadership?

Conditions?

Assets?

Obstacles?

Economy?

Support?

Could you describe how you combine farm work and household work?

Would you like to describe your motivation to grow according to ecological principles?

Background?

Network?

Values?

Circumstances?

Knowledge source?

Techniques, methods?

Would you like to describe your experiences as a woman in agriculture?

Expectations?

Treatment?

Impact?

What do you think about the trends in today's modern agriculture?

Larger farms, fewer farmers?

Export, import?

Conventional, organic?

How do you look at your business today, what are your plans for the future?

What is the role of small-scale and organic farming in society according to you?

What do you think is most important personally: to do farming in general or to farm organically?

Finally, is there anything else you would like to add or share?