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Department of Economics

Gender, labor and decision-making

- The woman's situation in family businesses in a Swedish agricultural setting

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Abstract

The inequality and separation of sexes seen in organizations may lead to inefficient use of human resources. Therefore, a more equal organization could lead to higher productivity and efficiency. Inequality within organizations is a problem also for the society as a whole since who is chosen for a position is not depended upon merits, leading to inefficiency. To not reflect upon traditional division of labor and decision-making could also lead to an undemocratic and unjust society. The aim of this thesis is to explore women and men's engagement a family business in an agricultural setting.

Gender theorists argue that gender arises from the social situation in society. There are three gender melodies affecting us: A-not A, A-a and A-B. The melodies are incorporated into a gender system. The gender system affect people with a separating force, showing that women and men are different, and a hierarchy force, saying that there is a male norm. However, the gender system and gender itself is changeable.

The literature review shows that gender influence how management in organizations is formed. Management and leadership are traditionally seen as something masculine. In family businesses labor and decision-making are commonly divided according to traditional gender roles. The woman often takes care of supportive functions like accounting and caring for the family. In an agricultural business labor is also divided according to traditional gender roles. The women are less involved in the heavy practical work than their spouses and instead are more involved in the administration and the domestic work. Within decision-making of an agricultural business the men are more likely to practice more power over strategic and operative decisions. However, the men are more likely to make decisions concerning the operative whilst the strategic decisions the spouses are more likely to do together. Furthermore, the women seem to be gaining more influence and involvement in the decisions-making process.

The focus in the study is the women associated with family businesses in a Swedish agricultural setting. The women's association can be by personal ownership or that their partners own a family business in the agricultural setting. The study is an explorative qualitative multiple case study consisting of twelve businesses with a total of 24 individuals. The empirical data was obtained by interviews with the individuals. The interviews were analyzed with pattern analysis.

The study shows that gender effect both the couples' division of labor and their decision-making process. Few of the participating couples have reflected upon their traditional division of labor and involvement in the decisions-making process. Those women in the study that are active in the practical work and decision-making are breaking the gender norms.

Sammanfattning

Ojämligheten och separeringen av könen inom organisationer kan leda till en ineffektiv användning av mänskliga resurser. Mer jämställda organisationer skulle leda till ökad produktivitet och effektivitet. Ojämligheten inom organisationer är också ett problem för samhället i stort eftersom den med störst meriter inte väljs för ett jobb, vilket leder till ineffektivitet. Att inte reflektera över traditionell arbetsfördelning och ledning kan också leda till ett odemokratiskt och orättvist samhälle. Syftet med denna studie är att utforska kvinnor och mäns delaktighet i ett familjeföretag i den gröna näringen.

Genusteoretiker hävdar att genus beror på den sociala situationen i samhället. Det finns tre genusedagogier som påverkar oss: A-inte A, A-a och A-B. Melodierna är införlivade i ett genussystem. Genussystemet påverkar människor med en separerande kraft, som visar att kvinnor och män är olika, och med en hierarki, som menar att det finns en manlig norm. Genussystemet och genus är i ständig förändring.

Litteraturgenomgången visar att genus påverkar hur ledning av organisationer formas. Ledning och ledarskap ses traditionellt som något manligt. I familjeföretag är arbete och beslut vanligen uppdelade enligt traditionella genusedagogier. Kvinnan tar ofta hand om stödfunktioner som redovisning och hushållsarbete. I ett jordbruksföretag är arbetet också uppdelat enligt ett traditionellt genusedagogier. Kvinnorna är mindre involverade i det tunga praktiska arbetet än deras partner och istället är de mer delaktiga i administrationen och hushållsarbetet. Inom beslutsfattande i jordbruksföretag är benägna att utöva mer makt över strategiska och operativa beslut. Män är också mer benägna att fatta operativa beslut medan de strategiska besluten görs tillsammans i paret. Kvinnorna verkar öka sitt inflytande och sin delaktighet i beslutsfattandet.

Fokus i studien är kvinnor involverade i familjeföretag inom den Svenska gröna näringen. Kvinnornas involvering kan ske antingen genom ägande eller genom att deras partner äger ett familjeföretag i den gröna näringen. Studien är en explorativ kvalitativ multipel fallstudie som består av tolv företag med totalt 24 personer. De empiriska data inhämtades genom intervjuer med de enskilda personerna. Intervjuerna analyserades därefter med mönsteranalys.

Studien visar att genus påverkar både företagets arbetsfördelning och deras beslutsprocess. Få av de deltagande företagen har reflekterat över sin traditionella arbetsfördelning och delaktighet i beslutsfattandet. De kvinnor i studien som är aktiva i det praktiska arbetet och i beslutsfattandet bryter mot könsrollerna.

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1 Introduction

Equality is reached when women and men have the same power and influence in all levels of society (Ministry of Education and Research, 2014). With equality between women and men, Sweden would be a more justly and democratic society. Economic growth is according to the Ministry of Education and Research (2014) another benefit of equality, since the society can then take advantage of everyone's competence. Bjursell and Bäckvall (2011, p 163) emphasize that Sweden is frequently characterized as a country that has integrated values of equality into society. Politicians and media drive the discussion on equality in businesses. However, Bjursell and Bäckvall (2011, p 163) express that even though Sweden is seen as an egalitarian society the family business setting rests on traditional values.

Globally the number of jobs is almost equally divided between women and men (Alvesson & Billing, 2011, p 85). However Alvesson and Billing (2011, p 79) continue, the division in labor between men and women is not equal. Women and men work in different professions and have different tasks within organizations, a situation present in the agricultural sector.

Dividing the labor at a farm not only includes the actual chores, it concerns the involvement in the decision-making process and power over production and services (Gasson & Winter, 1992, p 387). The workforce in the agricultural sector consist today of the same amount of women and men (Wahlgren, 2011a, p 4). However, as shown by Wahlgren (2011a, p 1), only 14-15 percent of the businesses are owned by women. Other reports show that the statistic of the ownership may not reflect the reality since only one person can be named owner of a business, and that is often the man (Wahlgren, 2011b, p 2). Thus, the number of businesses with a shared leadership amounts to about 30 percent (Wahlgren, 2011b, p 12). Even with this wider definition, the number of men alone in a leading position is more than 50 percent. Zeuli and King (1998, p 528) express a need for more research on women and men managing farms together.

The division of labor on a family farm is characterized by the gender norms in society (LRFs Jämställdhetsakademi, 2009, p 23). Gender norms are about the identity of female/male (Thomsson, 2003a, p 21). The identity is, according to Thomsson (2003a, p 21), by many of the gender theorists explained as women and men not being born female/male. Instead, it is the interpretation of women and men from the surroundings that makes an individual female/male. The individual has a gender, coding that the person is what is assumed to be of a woman or man by the society. Add that the man and the male are seen as the norm, as shown by Thomsson (2003a, p 30), and gender becomes about inequalities in society.

Alvesson and Billing (2011, p 13) continues upon this line stating that the inequality and separation of the sexes, seen from a management perspective, may lead to an inefficient use of human resources. If the organization were an equal workplace, the advantages would be broader knowledge and creativity (Alvesson & Billing, 2011, p 13). Furthermore, inequality in organizations is also a problem for the society as a whole, since the one with the most merits is not chosen for a position (Alvesson & Billing, 1989, p 64). Alvesson and Billing (1989, p 77) also stress the moral concern with inequalities in the workforce.

Cook and Hunsaker (2001, p 28) proceeds by saying the challenge for society today is not to guarantee entry for women into the work force, but to grant people equal opportunities to use

their full potential. Women's different strengths are needed at all levels of an organization, as well as in innovation and in order to understand market segmentation (Cook & Hunsaker, 2001, p 28). In 1994 the Swedish government expressed that equality in different levels of the workforce is a question for democracy (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994, p 8). The businesses that take into account women's competences are according to the government, more likely to have a higher productivity and efficiency.

1.1 Problem

When the owners of a family business in the agricultural sector does not reflect upon equality and instead divides the labor based on traditional gender norms constructed by society, competences may not be used. In addition, if the owners originate their decision-making in the division of labor it may lead to an inefficient resource allocation both for the business and for the society. To not reflect upon traditional division of labor and decision-making could also lead to an undemocratic and unjust society.

1.2 Aim and research questions

The aim of the thesis is to explore men and women's engagement in family businesses in an agricultural setting. To fulfill the aim the following research questions are guiding this thesis:

- How can the division of labor in agricultural family businesses be influenced by gender norms?
- How can the involvement in decision-making of agricultural family businesses be influenced by gender norms?

1.3 Delimitations

The context in this thesis is highly limited, this even though the context is important when making decisions. Hansson *et al.* (2013, p 241) state that farmers' decision-making is likely embedded in and dependent on the context. The family is an important context for a farm business because of the owner structure (Hansson *et al.*, 2013, p 241).

Focus in this thesis lies on the rural family since it, according to Andersson (2011, p 3), plays an important role in symbolically maintaining the heterosexual system and the patriarchal separation of labor within the family. Agricultural production is highly associated with male farmers and their masculinity since farms often are run and owned by men (Andersson, 2011, p 13). Hence, the profession farmer is often labeled as male.

The delimitation family business is chosen since almost 90 percent of the business in the agricultural sector are family owned (Emling, 2000, p 33). Furthermore, family business is chosen since its structure may lead to the women in the businesses becoming invisible in decision-making (Javefors Grauers, 2000, p 96). Bjursell and Melin (2011, pp 249–250) state that the invisibility and other challenges the women meet in a family business are not experienced in other business structures

Conclusions drawn from a media discourse on women in family businesses states that women in family businesses are not a homogeneous group (Bjursell & Bäckvall, 2011, p 167). Women in family business are from different social classes, different sectors, in different

hierarchical levels on the business and from different generations. The social class of the participants is not taken into account, which could affect the results. Also, note that all of the participants in the study are from the same ethnicity; no account for diversity has been made.

1.4 Definitions

The following four concepts are central in this thesis and therefore explicitly defined below.

1.4.1 Gender

In this thesis, a person's sex is seen as something a person is born with and their gender as what they become. These terms are however debated (Ambjörnsson, 2004, p 12). Berggren (2011, p 65) shows that the term gender has been used freely and with a number of meanings; frequently used in media as a direct translation for a person's sex. Hirdman (1988, p 50) on one side states that the use of gender as an equivalent to the social sex is a wide spread definition in anthropology. Berggren (2011, p 65) agrees with this definition and adds to it that gender also involves a power aspect. Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson (2003) on the other hand use sex when talking both about the sex we were born with and our social sex. Ambjörnsson (2004, p 12) emphasize that with the use of the term gender it has become easier to talk in a systematic way about women/men and female/male without mixing it with biological differences.

Sommestad (1992, p 23) applies sex and gender on the agricultural sector. The use of sex is to describe the segregation of women and men from a historic point of view whilst gender to describe why the segregation has occurred. Sommestad (1992, p 23) use gender as an extension of female and male individuals.

Based on the discussion above social sex will in this thesis be termed gender. There is one primary reason for this; it gives a clearer distinction between when someone is a female/male and when someone acts upon the presumptions of female/male.

1.4.2 Family business

A family business can be defined as a business that is controlled by a family and/or is considered to be a family business by the owners themselves. The definition is consistent with the work of Emling (2000, p 15) and Johansson and Lewin (1991, p 7). Furthermore Emling (2000, p 15) states that the business should have at least 5 millions in turnover and 5 employees in the business to be defined as a family business. But these aspects are not used in this thesis since Melin (2012, p 8) states that a family business should not be defined by their size. In the agricultural sector the size of the family business is problematized by Flygare (1999, p 321), stating that defining a family farm could be better done with how the labor is allocated.

Emling's (2000, p 15) other definitions involves that the ownership is planned to be transferred, that the ownership has been in the family for at least two generations and that at least three persons from the family are active in the business. These aspects are not considered since this study only focuses on the partners currently running the business. Johansson and Lewin (1991, p 7) have in their definition instead that the owners, not a particular number of persons, should be active in running the business. Melin (2012, p 9) follows this reasoning by

arguing that even though the family are not listed as owners they are often involved in the business. Many of these businesses are considered to be a family business by themselves.

To summarize, the definition of a family business in this thesis bases on the three following aspects:

- The owners have to see the business as a family business.
- As a minimum, one person in the family has to be the owner of the business.
- The family has to be active in running the business.

1.4.3 Family

With the definition above about family businesses run by a family, it is in line to discuss the term family. Elvin-Nowak (2003, p 151) problematizes about the word family and says that it varies over time and in different places, cultures and social contexts. Furthermore, Elvin-Nowak (2003, p 151) state that many families in this modern world are not just mother, father and child. The heterosexual nuclear family is challenging also from a equality point of view since it is such a traditional state (Elvin-Nowak, 2003, p 152). Berggren (2011, p 238) continues upon the problematization and state even though the family can look in many different ways there is always an ideal family consisting of biological and social parents.

Flygare (1999, pp 60–71) discuss upon family in a Swedish 20th century setting. The research shows that families in the agricultural setting were not only nuclear families. Instead, a family could include more then one generation and people not closely related to the owner.

In this thesis little account has been taken towards the family constellation. Instead, a couple is to be seen as a family. Still family is a present word and phenomenon since family business is explored.

1.4.4 Agricultural setting

In the report *Den osynlige entreprenören* (LRFs Jämställdhetsakademi, 2009, p 10) the Swedish term *De gröna näringarna*, that can be directly translated to *the green industry*, is defined as those industries depended upon natural resources such as water, forest and land. Hence, it is the procution of the businesses that links them to an agricultural setting. Furhtermore, an agricultural setting is a rural setting. The Swedish Board of Agriculture (2013) defines a rural setting, *landsbygd*, as those municipalities that have a population of most 30 000 citizens and/or where the largest town does not have more than 25 000 citizens. In the definition the Swedish Board of Agriculture also take account for commuting to another city.

2 Gender theory

Thomsson (2003a, p 17) state that all people are every minute of every hour of every day assisting in keeping the gender norm in the society. Furthermore, she state (2003a, p 17) the differences we experience with men and women have not risen from vacuum. Instead, they arise from social situations cheered on by us all (Thomsson, 2003a, p 17). The differences in how women and men are interpreted by their surroundings cannot be explained by what hormones we were born with or what upbringing we have, there has to be something else controlling our actions and perceptions. Thomsson (2003a, p 17) explains this something else as the social situation we all live in, which bases on a norm system. Still, gender and the norm system is not static phenomenon, they are rewritten every time they are challenged (Butler, 1999, pp 9–10; Thomsson, 2003b, p 38; Ambjörnsson, 2004, p 13).

2.1 Making gender

Gender comes of the stereotypical version of a woman and a man (Hirdman, 2001, p 26). Ambjörnsson (2004, p 12) expresses there is an overall view within feministic studies that female and male are culturally and socially created. Furthermore, there are two views upon how long this argument can be drawn (Ambjörnsson, 2004, p 12). One side of theorists has their point of departure in that people act based on who they are. Another side of theorists believes that you become who you are based on your actions.

Thomsson (2003a, p 32) points out that when making the group women and the group men opposites it rules out other environmental factors, not limited by group boundaries, that affect people. Butler (1999, p 7) also states there is a problem about seeing women as a homogenous group. Characterizing women as women, can according to Butler (1999, p 6) consolidate rather than theorize the gender problem.

The stereotypical gender expresses itself, according to Hirdman (2001, pp 26–44), in three ways, three melodies; A-not A, A-a and A-B. The melody A-not A describes the woman as something that is not taking into account when talking of humans on a general basis (Hirdman, 2001, pp 27–28). A-not A sees in that the woman is non-existing in history and when considering objective phenomenon. A-a is, as described by Hirdman (2001, pp 28–31), the melody where the woman is lesser of a man, a second somewhat worse of a man. The melody basis upon the man as the norm, that the woman is the not-norm. The last melody, A-B, basis in that the man and woman are judged as opposites (Hirdman, 2001, p 35).

The A-B melody can be seen as an evolvment of A-not A and a extreme version of A-a (Hirdman, 2001, p 36). The three melodies link together and confirm each other. Hirdman (2001, p 70) shows that the links and conformations is part of a system.

2.2 The norm and gender system

Thomsson (2003a, pp 29–30) expresses that the norm system follows certain rules and unspoken assumptions, as with all norms in a society. These norms are decided by traditions that has ravaged freely for a long time (Thomsson, 2003a, pp 29–30). Norms keep living on once they are seen as given and true. Furthermore, norms collaborate with, and contribute to, the society's system for power and reward (Thomsson, 2003a, pp 29–30). The system gives power to and rewards what is considered male and female.

A elaboration of the view by Thomsson (2003a) about the norm system, is the gender system introduced in Sweden by Hirdman (1988; 2001). The gender system's foundation is that the female suborder and the male superiority is not bound by nature (Hirdman, 1988, p 49). The reasoning is all in line with Thomsson's (2003a) argument that gender has not risen from vacuum but from a norm system. Hirdman (1988; 2001) theorize further by saying that the norm system is a product of something else, the gender system.

The gender system is built upon two laws (or structures or beams) which gives an abstract pattern structure (Hirdman, 1988, p 51; Thomsson, 2003b, p 46). Hirdman (1988, p 51) states the two keystones stand for that women and men are separated and that there is a hierarchy between female/male. The keystones are related to the gender melodies of Hirdman (2001); the separation to A-B and the hierarchy to A-a. Furthermore, there is an interaction between these two structures, they give each other fuel (Hirdman, 1988, p 52).

The separation of gender expresses itself in for example what profession the sexes choose and what perceptions there are on the sexes (Hirdman, 1988, p 52). Hence, the separation is both physical and psychological. The separation grows stronger over time since the different places and chores that are associated with one sex are rewarded by society. The separation of the gender then fuels the other law, the hierarchy, by legitimizing the male norm (Hirdman, 1988, p 51).

The beam hierarchy indicate that masculinity is the norm (Hirdman, 1988, p 52; Thomsson, 2003b, p 50). Hirdman (2001, p 60) states that the male norm has arisen from a long line of cultural inheritance. When a norm exists there is also the other, the not-norm; in this case the woman (Hirdman, 2001, p 60). With a norm a power relation develops that gives power to the norm and not-power to the actor that is not the norm (Hirdman, 2001, p 63). The power relation fuels the separation by separating the genders into this hierarchy.

Critic towards the gender system has mainly been seeing the man and the male as the norm as to structuralistic, timeless or somewhat unchangeable (Berggren, 2011, p 66). The gender system can be seen as a to static system, not open to change. Critics mean, according to Berggren (2011, p 66), that the theoretical views in the gender system alienate women and men and presents the men as adversaries to equality.

2.3 Changing gender

Butler (1999, pp 9–10) and Ambjörnsson (2004, p 13) emphasize that gender is not a static phenomenon. Since gender are created with all our actions gender is to be seen as a process, a process that can cease to exist (Ambjörnsson, 2004, p 13). Moreover, neither the gender system is static (Thomsson, 2003b, p 38). Thomsson (2003b, p 38) emphasize that structures does not have their own life. Instead, it is us people living in the society that carry and legitimize the structures.

There are many reasons for the need to breach the gender system. One reason is that both the actors, as individuals, loose on the existing gender system (Butler, 1999, pp 9–10; Ambjörnsson, 2004, p 13). Both women and men are burdened by the obligations and restrictions that the gender system generates. Another reason is that with democracy comes every person's equal value, woman or man (Hirdman, 2001, p 104). Thirdly, there is the rational reason based upon capitalism (Hirdman, 2001, p 106). Rational reasoning in the sense

that capitalism is built upon the logic of assessing traits, no matter what sex the trait belongs to.

One could ask why the system still exist when there are advantages to break it and when it is the people controlling it. Thomsson (2003b, p 40) express a sacrificed, a price, for breaking a norm. The price includes for example needing to motivate a breach, reduced resources, and punishment (Thomsson, 2003b, p 40). The sacrifice is related to the argument by Thomsson (2003a) about power and reward within the norm system. Lastly, Thomsson (2003b, p 42) argues that it is hard for a singular individual to change the system. Hence, collaboration between people is necessary.

2.4 Theoretical synopsis

Gender arises from the social situation, the norm system, in society (Thomsson, 2003a). Hirdman (2001) expresses that there are three gender melodies affecting us: A-not A, A-a and A-B. The melodies are incorporated into a gender system. The gender system affect people with a separating force and a hierarchy force (Hirdman, 1988). The separation is seen in that women and men have different assumptions on who they are supposed to be and what they are supposed to do. The hierarchy is what makes the male norm and what rewards the ones who legitimize the male norm. The gender system and gender itself is changeable (Butler, 1999; Thomsson, 2003b; Ambjörnsson, 2004). However, since it is a sacrifice to go against the norms there is a need for mobilization to overcome the problem with breaching (Thomsson, 2003b).

3 Literature review

With gender saturating peoples everyday life, it influence how management and organizations are formed (Simrell King, 1995, p 67). Gender also affects what kind of education and labor the different sexes are drawn to (Alvesson & Billing, 2011, p 120). The separation exists since most people adjust to the current norm and expectations of how things should be in this society.

Alvesson and Billing (2011, p 120) continues stating that leadership and organizational management are traditionally seen as something masculine. The masculine view may lead to a problem for female managers since they have to balance the view of being a competent (masculine) manager and the thought of them being enough feminine to not break the gender norm (Alvesson & Billing, 2011, p 120). According to Simrell King (1995, p 67), there has been an increase in women who holds a high position in businesses. Nevertheless, women still often feel the need to act like a man to get the position and then to keep the position (Simrell King, 1995, p 67). Simrell King (1995, p 78) problematize that women in a higher position may have to put their femininity on hold to fit into the norm of the masculine manager. When putting their femininity on hold women legitimize the rules by accepting them (Simrell King, 1995, p 67).

3.1 Previuos research on women in family business

Javefors Grauers (2000, p 82) and Bjursell and Melin (2011, p 249) indicate that a challenge specifically experienced within family businesses is the traditional division in functions and roles seen in the business hierarchy. According to Bjursell and Melin (2011, p 250), the women often have responsibility within the business over chores like staff care, the accounting, the secretary work and sales support. Moreover, within the family the chores of women usually consist of unity, reproduction and values (Bjursell & Melin, 2011, p 250). Bjursell and Melin (2011, p 250) conclude saying that to have a traditional division of roles can undermine the development of the business since the women's functions are merely supportive.

The women usually have an "invisible" role in the business, while the man is representing the business (Javefors Grauers, 2000, p 95). The invisibility is expressed in a way that the woman usually is involved in most of the decisions in the business but they are not seen in the statistics or in the society as business owners. The conclusion drawn by Javefors Grauers (2000, p 96) is that there are a number of invisible women business owners and that their significance have been underestimated.

The challenges with invisibility are also pointed out by Bjursell & Melin (2011, pp 249–250). They argue that the invisibility the women meet in a family business is not seen in other business types. The women are invisible in that sense that they are not valued to the business and are often doing the job unpaid or with a low compensation. The invisible woman can be a wife working in the business not getting valued or it can occur when partners start a business and the wife becomes a co-founder. Bjursell and Melin (2011, pp 249–250) continues by saying that these challenges may lead to the woman not having any formal role in the business and thus not the same right to lead or be a part of the decision-making process. In addition, even though the women are recognized by the business internally they may not be so by costumers, suppliers or other business owners (Bjursell & Melin, 2011, pp 249–250).

A notable thing that Javefors Grauers (2000, p 95) found is that invisibility was not the case when a woman ran the business; the man did not become invisible in the statistic or the society. The reasoning above leads to that Javerfors Gauers (2000, p 95) draws the conclusion that differences in roles and functions are not a family business problem per se it is a patriarchal problem.

Jimenez (2009, p 60) indicate that whilst research has shown that the family business is a place for the patriarch to bloom other researchers say they might see a change in the woman's position in a family business. The family business may create a number of advantages for women wanting to make it to the top (Jimenez, 2009, p 60). Moreover Jimenez (2009, p 60) state, even though women in family businesses meet the same challenges as other women owning a business they also meet the challenges of the extraordinary owner structure in a family business.

3.2 A historic view of gender issues in the agricultural sector

Flygare (2011, p 224) indicate that women and men have worked with different chores at the farm for at least 3000 years. Especially the task of milking the cows was a woman's work, mostly because of a taboo stopping men from milking (Flygare, 2011, p 224). The process of milking and handling dairy went through a shift in Sweden between 1850 to 1950 (Somestad, 1992, p 256). From being a woman's work where she had the expertise, it shifted to a profession for men alongside the mechanization of the milking process. First men acquired the leading positions in the dairy business continuing with taking over the practical work of milking from the women.

The same sort of shift, where men took over a woman's work as a results of the mechanization, took place in other sectors as well (Alvesson & Billing, 2011, p 84). Sometimes the mechanization and a more scientific approach to a profession made it a woman's work (as with typing) and sometimes it made it a man's work (as with brewing and milking). Alvesson and Billing (2011, p 84) argues that the transition in the division of labor does not have anything to do with the biological differences between women and men. Instead, it is a construction of the society's historical interests and assumptions. The reasoning above also proves that the division of labor is changeable.

All through history most businesses in the Swedish agricultural sector have been a household and a family (Flygare, 2011, p 224). According to Flygare (2011, p 224) the survival of the household involved all family members and the work was often divided by age and gender. The male farmer was the focus when politicians and society wanted to professionalize the agricultural sector in the 1950s (Flygare, 2011, p 225). The collaboration of the man and woman on the farm was still very important since they were the ones still working in the professional agriculture.

On one hand Flygare (2011, p 225) argues that the large arable units are today often run only by men but in the animal production the women's participation has not changed. On the other hand Flygare (2011, p 225) state that the small agricultural business whose primary task is to supplement the household's incomes runs by both men and women. Furthermore, Andersson (2011, p 4) indicate that the agricultural family business has not kept up with the general improvement of an equal society, one reason being that it operates in a rural context.

In a rural setting the situation for women has improved during the last 40 years, but still women are oppressed more than men in a number of ways, research by Andersson (2011, p 11) indicates. Alvesson and Billing (2011, p 89) argues for a trend in the Swedish agricultural sector as well as in the heavy industry that with a stagnation in employment there could become a feminization of the labor. One reason being that agricultural farming and employed in a heavy industry becomes an unsecure low-wage job, which is where women often are overrepresented (Alvesson & Billing, 2011, p 89).

3.3 Previous research on labor and decision-making in an agricultural setting

Gasson and Winter (1992, p 387) and Javefors Grauers (2003, p 26) indicate that society's gender system saturates also the agricultural sector. Javefors Grauers (2003, p 26) argues that the system takes expression in that the man is seen as the norm for farming while the woman becomes invisible. Moreover, the woman is seen as someone who works on the farm but with complementary activities whilst the man stands for the person who works with the primary activity on the farm (Javefors Grauers, 2003, p 26). Hence, a clear power asymmetry between the man and the woman unfolds (Javefors Grauers, 2003, p 26).

The gender system also affects the division of labor in agricultural businesses (Gasson & Winter, 1992, p 387). A study conducted in Great Britain by Gasson and Winter (1992) showed that the women were often less involved than their spouses in the manual farm work. In the study the women were more likely to work with animals and administration whilst the men were more likely to work with milking, fieldwork and maintenance (Gasson & Winter, 1992, p 391).

Flygare (1999) has done research in Sweden on division of labor in the agricultural sector from a historic perspective. The research shows that when the employed workforce was rationalized around 1950, women took on more practical work (Flygare, 1999, p 325). The woman continued to work double sine she still had the responsibility of caring for the family and the household. Flygare (1999, p 325) also shows that at the end of the 20th century women combined the work on the farm with domestic work and in many cases employment outside the own business.

Flygare (1999, p 328) continues problematizing the reason for women seeking work outside the business by questioning if the women have taken control over their time and workload. The reason for outside employment, Flygare argues (1999, p 325), is dependent on the amount of male workforce the business has access to; the more male workforce, the higher chance of the woman working outside the business. The woman could be a back-up, working outside the business when the market needs workforce and returning home when she is needed at the farm or not needed in the public workforce (Flygare, 1999, p 328).

Flygare (1999, p 326) expresses that the women in the agricultural setting has, even though they made a substantial contribution to the workforce, been the invisible farmers. One contributing reason for the invisibility is the woman's absence in the statistical records (Flygare, 1999, p 326). The domestic work and the practical work made by the women were until 1965 not registered as labor. Flygare (1999, p 331) state there is a hierarchy between the woman's and the man's area of labor, where the woman's labor have a lower status than the man's.

An empirical study made in Canada by Martz (2006, p 181) state that even though women took on more traditionally masculine work areas the women still had the responsibility for the household and the domestic work there. Martz (2006, p 181) also found an indication that some of the men in the study began to take on larger responsibility for the household. Furthermore the study found that the younger farmers had been much more influenced by the changing gender norms in society (Martz, 2006, p 182). The younger farmers seemed to have a more open attitude to a non-traditional division of labor. They were also more open to working outside the farm and not seeing that as a limitation (Martz, 2006, p 182).

The study (Martz, 2006, p 181) concludes that women and men have changed their roles at the farm during the time of 1982 to 2002. The women on the farm extended their role into many of the masculine domains such as fieldwork, livestock work and leadership (Martz, 2006, p 181). The extension is interpreted by Martz (2006, p 181) as a result from the business responding to the prevailing financial and political situation and the increased opportunities provided by the social gender change.

Gasson and Winter (1992, p 387) proceed saying gender affects not only how labor is divided, it also affects the involvement in the decision-making process. Gasson and Winter (1992) showed in their study that the woman in a farm business practices less power when it comes to strategic decisions than their spouse. The influence the woman has if she is working outside of the business is even lower (Gasson & Winter, 1992, p 396). When both partners are working outside the business the woman is consulted more, in term of decision-making. In the study by Gasson and Winter (1992, p 391), one in three male farmers involved their wife in any large financial decision. In the everyday managing of the farm, one in four of the male farmers make joint decisions with their wife (Gasson & Winter, 1992, p 391). So according to Gasson and Winter (1992, p 387) the wife in a farm business does not only use less power when making a strategic decision, she also exercise less decision power in the day-to-day running of the business.

Martz (2006, p 184) continues this line by showing that in her study in Canada the men were more likely to handle the operative decisions concerning crops, livestock, marketing and insurance. The woman was instead more likely to take decisions concerning large purchases for the home, recreation and the children's activities (Martz, 2006, p 184). Furthermore, when investing in or selling land or equipment the spouses were more likely to make a joint decision than a separate (Martz, 2006, p 184). Martz (2006, p 184) also conclude that the women working at the farm are gaining involvement in the decisions-making process, as she gain access to more masculine domains.

4 Method

In short the study is a qualitative case study where the data is collected by interviews. A case study is according to Yin (2007, p 18) conducted when there is a wish to explore complex social phenomenon but to still keep the big picture in mind . The social complex phenomenon is gender in this thesis. Choosing a case study makes, according to Yin (2007, p 23), the problem in need of a how or why formulation. Furthermore the focus should be on a current event (Yin, 2007, p 23). In this thesis the current event is a couple's relationship.

In line with Blaxter *et al.* (2006) and Esaiasson *et al.* (2007, p 37) the study is a descriptive study that tries to describe how a situation is. The situation in thesis is labor and involvement in decision-making in family businesses in an agricultural setting. The study is consequently not a normative study, as described by Esaiasson *et al.* (2007, p 44). The problem described in the study does not involve trying to change a norm phenomenon in society. However, the personal ambition with the study is that it can help change the gender norm in which the society is ensnared.

4.1 Finding literature

The approach for finding literature has been to find a few central key references and then follow a line of citation to other references. The key references in this thesis are Hirdman (1988), Gasson and Winter (1992), Flygare (1999), Martz (2006), and Alvesson and Billing (2011). The key references were found by initial literature from the supervisor of this thesis, professors on the institution, a database search, and previous work done by the writer.

The database search was done with phrases arranged with the keywords in Table 1. The main keywords arise from the key references and the problem background. The search database used in the thesis was primarily Primo, which is run by the library at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Secondly, there was a use of the database Google Scholar and The Uppsala University Library's database. Three databases was used since it according to Robson (2011, p 53) may differ a great deal on what the databases render. Furthermore Robson (2011, p 53) states that searching in more than one database still does not guarantee that all relevant information have been found.

Table 1 shows the keywords used in the database search. The first row shows the main keyword and the following rows shows synonyms and words used as a development.

Gender	Labor	Decision-making	Agricultural setting	Family business
Women	Work	Management	Farm	Family farm
Female	Chores		Agricultural	

The age of the references range from 1987 to 2014. A substantial part of the references were published in 2011. For the parts on division of labor and decision-making within the agricultural setting two references are highly used, Martz (2006) and Gasson and Winter (1992). The research by Martz (2006) is based in Canada whilst for Gasson and Winter (1992) it is Great Britain. Hence, the research evolves from different contexts. There is also a 14 year differ from the publication of Gasson and Winter (1992) to Martz (2006). Where the references contradict each other it might be the case that the society has evolved during the fourteen years between the publications or it might be that they are from different contexts.

4.2 Gathering and analyzing empirical data

The strategy for the empirical data collection is a multiple case study, as described by Miles and Huberman (1994, p 29). In line with Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p 28) the goal with the case study is to evolve and generalize to theories, not to populations. A multiple case study, in contrast to a single case, lead to a higher possibility of generalization to theory (Robson, 2011, p 140). Furthermore, Robson (2011, p 140) state that with case studies, there is a challenge with any type of generalizations since the units of analysis often are high in variation. Moreover Yin (2007, p 97) argues that another challenge with case studies is that the environment in which it takes place cannot be controlled.

With a flexible research design, like an explorative case study, the methodology emerges and evolves during the gathering of the data (Robson, 2011, p 131). With twelve cases in this study, it may be that the methodology of the first case is not the same as for the last case. Furthermore Robson (2011, p 131) states that the flexibility of the design leads to a more individual methodology, specified to answer the thesis's research question. The design might not be applicable to other research questions than the one in this thesis.

The research design is flexible in the sense that there is a need to be open about what one is looking for (Robson, 2011, p 139). Because of the need for flexibility, there is also a need to decide how loose or selective the design should be. On one hand, a too loose design gives a lot of cases and theories. On the other hand, a too selective design may give a too narrow view, which may lead to that the results may be misinterpreted. The approach gives the consequence in this thesis that the empirical findings dictate what theories are used, which affect the result and analysis in a somewhat bias way. Pre-structuring (Robson, 2011, p 139) has been used in this thesis to try and keep a balance between loose and selective. Some of the pre-structure has evolved into chapter two and three and has partly been rewritten after the empirical study. The reason for this approach is to have a loose view going into the empirical study and a selective view when doing the analysis.

4.2.1 Sampling

“We are generalizing from one case to the next on the basis of a match to the underlying theory, not to a larger universe. The choice of cases usually is made on conceptual grounds, not representative grounds.” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p 29)

This thesis tries to generalize to theory and the cases were sampled based on conceptual grounds. Miles and Hubermann (1994, p 33) argues that a sampling process is needed to be able to make any sort of generalization at the end of the study. As indicated by Stake (1995, p 4) a case study like this is done to understand the cases sampled and the sampling is unlikely to represent the entire population of cases within the constraints. In line with Neergaard (2010, p 11) the cases for the study were sampled from a purposeful perspective to suit and illustrate the problem in the thesis.

Furthermore, Yin (2007, p 104) expresses that a preliminary study is a good way to establish credibility and suitability in the sampling. The preliminary study in this thesis is illustrated in Table 2. During the sampling the participants were informed that it was voluntary to participate in the study and they were told about the topic of the study, which is in line with the ethical recommendations from the Swedish Research Council (2002, p 7). A sampling was also done to get informed consent from the participants (Swedish Research Council,

2002, p 9). During the sampling process, two businesses expressed they did not want to take part in the study so no records of their involvement were kept.

Table 2 showing the sampling data in the thesis.

Business	Active in an agricultural setting	Production/service	Seen as a family business	Active in running the business	At least one owns the business	Business located in Sweden	Heterosexual couple	Individual	Sex
A	X	Crops	X	X	X	X	X	AW	Woman
A	X	Crops	X	X	X	X	X	AM	Man
B	X	Forestry + Cattle	X	X	X	X	X	BW	Woman
B	X	Forestry + Cattle	X	X	X	X	X	BM	Man
C	X	Eggs	X	X	X	X	X	CW	Woman
C	X	Eggs	X	X	X	X	X	CM	Man
D	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	DW	Woman
D	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	DM	Man
E	X	Berries + Jam	X	X	X	X	X	EW	Woman
E	X	Berries + Jam	X	X	X	X	X	EM	Man
F	X	Lamb	X	X	X	X	X	FW	Woman
F	X	Lamb	X	X	X	X	X	FM	Man
G	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	GW	Woman
G	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	GM	Man
H	X	Stud farm	X	X	X	X	X	HW	Woman
H	X	Stud farm	X	X	X	X	X	HM	Man
I	X	Agricultural contractors	X	X	X	X	X	IW	Woman
I	X	Agricultural contractors	X	X	X	X	X	IM	Man
J	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	JW	Woman
J	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	JM	Man
K	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	KW	Woman
K	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	KM	Man
L	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	LW	Woman
L	X	Milk	X	X	X	X	X	LM	Man
12 businesses	All	8 different "sectors"	All	All	All	All	All	24 individuals	

The cases sampled are active in an agricultural setting and they have a wide range of production and services. The cases are also family businesses based on the criteria in the definition of a family business, chapter 1.4.2. The location of the businesses in Sweden is

sampled from a convenience perspective. Gender is contextdependent (Butler, 1999, p 6) while other countries than Sweden is not part of the sampling.

Only heterosexual couples are included in the study since Seymor (1999, p 76) state that it is in heterosexual couples where inequality between the partners is traditionally a problem. The choice of heterosexual couples is straight forward since the focus in the study is the gender norm. Gender exist also in homosexual couples and gender still affect single people running a business. These two situations will not be reflected upon further in this thesis but it is important to raise the awareness that the problem explored may be a problem for other than this analytical part.

The unit of analysis is the business, in which a couple is operating. Hence, the couple is the context family. Other parts of the context family are touched but neither analyzed nor always explored. The partners having children has not been taking into account, which could affect the context family and herewith the result.

Note that even though businesses E and I at a first glance may seem as outsiders compared to the more farm-like businesses, they are highly related to agricultural production/service. Both the businesses have timber and land and before entering their present production/service they were primarily farmers.

4.2.2 Interview questions

The questions in the study center around the interviewees describing and explaining situations and processes, as described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p 30). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p 30) argues that when asking more general questions the interviewee might have a hard time to process the question. In line with Esaiasson *et al.* (2007, p 301) the interview questions are seen as a guide, not a tool in need of strict following. The important part is that all of the themes and questions are touched during some part of the interview (Esaiasson *et al.*, 2007, p 301). The interview questions can be viewed in Appendix 1.

The themes during the interview were background information, division of labor and involvement in the decision-making process. The focus was to see if there was a separation and/or a hierarchy in the businesses. Within the themes, there was a limited amount of questions. Instead, the questions had follow-up questions. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p 138) having a lot of follow-up questions means that the interviewer needs to be an active listener.

Yin (2007, p 105) argues that to ensure quality the interview material should go through a pilot study. To ensure quality the study's interview material completed two trails. In the initial trial the questions were tested to see if they fit the relevance of the study. The trial was held with a couple that can relate to the problem of the thesis. The second trial was to ensure that the form of the questions was right and that the revised questions were appropriate. The second trial was conducted with a couple that could have been a part in the study if they were not closely related to the interviewer. The first trial had more of a general approach with a two-way discussion while the second trial was more of a dress rehearsal. Both of the couples in the pilot study were chosen based on accessibility, in terms of geography and convenience.

4.2.3 Conducting the interviews

In line with Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p 30) the interviews had a descriptive approach. The interviewees were encouraged to describe situations and experiences as detailed as possible in terms of feelings, thoughts and actions. It is up to the interviewer to interpret why the interviewees behave or feel as they did.

At the start of the interviews there was an explanatory part where the grounds for the interview were laid out. The interviewee learned about the structure of the interview and that a recorder was used. Recording of the interviews is done since it according to Yin (2007, p 119) will lead to a more accurate rendering of the interviews. Using a recorder was checked with the participants on before hand and it is approved on the premises that non other than the researcher will have the recording.

The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to 3 hours based on how active the interviewee was. At the end of the interview the participants were informed about the higher goal and purpose of the report. The handling of the purpose is not done in line with the recommendation from the Swedish Research Council (2002, p 7). The Swedish Research Council (2002, p 7) state that the purpose and the higher goal should be told to the participants before agreeing to be a part of the study. In this thesis, the higher purpose is not told in the beginning since it may endanger the interviews in a way that the participants may give answers based on what they think the interviewee wants to hear.

4.2.4 Analyzing the interviews

All participants in the study are coded from their names and their business names. The Swedish Research Council (2002, p 12) and Yin (2007, p 185) emphasize that anonymity and confidentiality is important when a private theme is covered. An anonymity and confidential approach makes a protection for the participants (Swedish Research Council, 2002, p 12; Yin, 2007, p 185). This study circles around very private themes with its questions about gender related issues within the interviewees' relationship. Anonymity is therefore needed for the participants to accept the interview questions and to have trust in the interviewer.

The qualitative analysis is built upon three phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, all in line with Miles and Huberman (1994). The phases overlap each other and span from the beginning of the thesis to the date of the publication. Miles and Huberman (1994, p 69) argues that when pattern analyzing is applied throughout the thesis it helps reduce large amount of data and helps bring clarity into similarities between the cases. The pattern codes used are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. The pattern codes and their explanation used in the thesis. The codes arise from the theory and literature review.

Pattern code	Explanation
DIV CP	How the chores in the private are divided
EXPL CP	Explanation of the division of chores in the private
DIV CB	How the chores in the business are divided
EXPL CB	Explanation of the division of chores in the business
HWD	How they work with decisions
DD	Division in who makes the decisions
LO	When any of the partners express they are left out of the decision-making process

Which categories and parts to analyze were chosen after the interviews was conducted. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, pp 30–31) argues that a reason for choosing the patterns after the interviews is to have an open mind and to not have any presumptions during the interviews. The interview still focused around certain themes and problems based on the theory and literature review, in line with Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p 31).

4.3 Validity and reliability

A challenge with flexible designs is to ensure validity and reliability (Robson, 2011, p 155). The challenge with the measurement validity is according to Bryman (2008, p 151), whether the measure of concept used really are a measure for the concept. The concept measured is equality and the measures of equality in this thesis are division of labor and involvement in the decision-making process.

The challenge when only looking at the division of labor and the involvement in the decisions-making process is that it rules out how the people got the specific function, as described by Simrell King (1995, p 67). The price for earning a function may not be equal to all people. Alvesson and Billing (2011, pp 87–89) also points out the risk of staring blindly at numbers when it comes to equality. The quality of the equality is just as important when looking at structures such as the patriarch. In this thesis, the reasons for why the labor and decision-making process look as it does are also explored which contribute to a higher validity in that the concept equality is actually measured.

Bryman (2008, pp 149–150) identifies three factors for evaluating reliability in research; stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency. Stability ensures that the research can be duplicated with a high correlation between the first and second observation (Bryman, 2008, p 149). With this thesis and its findings there is a challenge for replication and re-creation. Robson (2011, p 155) express that it is also debated whether it is desirable for a study on humans, like this case study, to be able to be replicated. However there is a higher possibility of rendering the same observations if the cases from this thesis were observed again.

The next reliability factor Bryman (2008, p 150) identifies is internal reliability, which stands for that the indicators are related to each other. In this thesis the internal reliability is seen in the relation between the asked questions are minimized since the questions are analyzed as a total sum of the interviews. Lastly, Bryman (2008, p 150) identifies inter-observer consistency, which says that subjective observations can lead to an absence of consistency. Subjective observations are present in this thesis but there is still consistency since only one person, the researcher, are translating and interpreting the data.

5 Empirical background

The empirical study consists of twelve businesses with 24 individuals. This chapter gives a background to the different businesses and individuals. The description of the businesses and individuals is summarized in Table 4. As explained in the sampling process (in chapter 4.2.1) all of the cases are heterosexual couples that have a business in an agricultural setting. The businesses are family businesses based on the definition described in the thesis. Eleven of the twelve cases have the marital status married. The other case (L) is cohabitating.

The variable age is presented as an average between the two individuals in the business. The average is to be seen as an indication on what generation the individuals is part of. There are no more than ten years between the individuals in a couple, which gives an indication on the generation. The age of the individuals is a part of the study since Martz (2006) indicate that younger farmers in Canada are more affected by the changing gender norms in society.

Fourteen of the participants in the study earn some part of their living from a labor outside the business. In four couples, both of the partners work and have income from another source. In the other six couples, three women and three men work outside.

Table 4. Background variables of the businesses and individuals in the study.

Business name	Marital status	Age Average	Work outside business		Type of business		Production/ service	Ownership	
			W	M	Joint-stock company	Sole proprietorship		50/50	Not 50/50
A	Married	60		X	X	X	Crops	X	X
B	Married	63		X		X	Forestry Cattle		X
C	Married	47				X	Eggs	X	
D	Married	53				X	Milk		X
E	Married	65		X	X		Berries Jam	X	
F	Married	52	X	X		X	Lamb	X	
G	Married	54	X	X		X	Milk	X	
H	Married	56	X		X	X	Stud farm	X	
I	Married	59	X		X		Agricultural contractors		X
J	Married	44	X			X	Milk		X
K	Married	47	X	X		X	Milk	X	X
L	Cohabiting	39	X	X		X	Milk		X

Four of the businesses are joint-stock companies. In two of the cases (A and H) the land and the properties are organized in a sole proprietorship, the joint-stock company leases the land and the properties from the sole proprietorship. In these two cases, both parts of the businesses will be analyzed and taken into account. When only one thing is analyzed this will be specified. Lastly, G, J and L conduct their business in a leasehold estate. Most of the other business has some sort of lease on land and G, J and L are entirely using leasehold estate.

Many of the businesses have more than one production and service; most of them have a lot more than that. When the sector says milk all the businesses also have cultivation of different kinds. Many of the businesses also combine different livestock but one type is often seen as the main livestock. Most of the businesses have some forestry. However, business B, H and to some extent L, work the forestry extensively. In addition, even if the businesses are categories with service or production there is a need to make a notion that this is roughly described. Businesses A, B, C, E, G, H and J also provide a service whilst producing something. It is sails of different kinds, social entrepreneurship and horse riding.

In terms of ownership over the business, there are three types: one partner owning the business, both owning the business equally and another arrangement of the ownership. One partner owns businesses D, I and L. Both business D and L are owned by the man in the relationship and in both cases it is the family farm from the man's side. The ownership over business I is on the other hand a bit odd since IW and IM in separate interviews stated the other partner as the one owning the joint-stock company.

The next way is when the ownership of the business is split equally between the partners, this is the case in business C, E, F, G, H and J. In Business H, both the partners own both the joint-stock company and the soil proprietorship. The ownership of the soil proprietorship was regulated after they married so HW owned half of the land. They started the joint-stock company long before they got married but they have always owned half each. In couples C, E and F both the soil proprietorship and the land are owned equally. Businesses G and J are run as leasehold estate were both partners owns the soil proprietorship. GW and GM have brought some land outside their leasehold estate, which they own equally.

The third way is when another arrangement exists. In couple A the joint-stock company is owned equally while AM owns the soil proprietorship. AW and AM has a prenuptial agreement that states that the land and properties AM inherited from his family farm is his if there is a divorce or in case of death. The land and properties purchased after they married is both their possession. In couple K the ownership is much the same. They own the soil proprietorship together but the land bought before the marriage is KMs. The land bought after is both their possession. Business B was until recently owned entirely by BM but after pressure from their children and their external advisor the ownership is now split so that BW owns 40 % of the business. The extra 20 % that BM owns is a sum of inheritance he put into the business.

6 Results

The results are reduced and displayed with pattern analysis, in line with the suggestions by Miles and Huberman (1994). The quotes from the interviewees are translated from the interviewees' native language Swedish. In Appendix 2 the quotes are presented both in Swedish and with their translation into English. The quotes are presented like this as a way to establish credibility in the translations. When the interviewees mention an individual's real name, it is replaced with their coded name within square brackets. When the interviewees use "you" as an expression it is specified in a footnote who this "you" refers to.

6.1 Division of labor

"[HW] and I have always, no matter what it is about, each of us do what we are intended to do. I do not force her to drive the tractor." - HM

6.1.1 Practical work

In business A, B, C, E, F, G, H and K the couple share a substantial amount of the practical workload. In those businesses where the practical work is not shared (D, I, J and L) the men are responsible. LW and DW both expresses that they help with the cows if it is necessary. Moreover JW is responsible for the insemination whilst JM takes care of the other practical work with the cows. Within the four businesses IW is the only one who does not do any sort of practical work on any occasion.

AW is the quality manager in business A and sorts all the crops. AM repairs the machines and takes care of some of the cultivation. AM state that AW is more valuable than he is to the business. Without AWs quality skills, they would not sell any decent products AM says. The couple in business C shares the chores with the hens even though it is CW who is formally in charge. In business E the couple handles the jam process together and often do one batch each alongside each other. EM has gradually taken over the bigger batches since the bigger batches have become too heavy for EW. The same transition has happened in the delivery part of the business. EM has started to deliver much more than EW because of the heavy work. The practical work in business F is shared as FW takes care of the sheep in the morning and FM takes care of them in the evening. HW and HM shares some of the practical work, they both for example drive the delivery car and handles the insemination. Business G and K both have milk production and in both businesses, the couples share the work in the stable. GW and GM usually take one milking shift each every day, either morning or evening. Sometimes GW would like to drive the tractor again since it is such a heavy work with the animals. Before their sons got involved, GW was much more involved in the cultivation, "it was necessary, it was just the two of us". Nonetheless, she is rather glad not to be forced to work on the field anymore.

Individual CW illustrates a supporter role when asked upon how they share the practical workload in the business. CW state, "it becomes a bit traditional, I'm supporting when it is very intense". By supporting, she then explains that it involves driving food out to CM and their employee out on the field during harvest season. CW also picks up spare parts, all to serve CM and the employee. In addition, individual DW supports the business by picking up spare parts and driving out food to the men working on the fields. During the harvest season, DW is also involved in the milking process since the men are short on time. IW also says she

has more of a supporting role since also she serves with spare parts and food to the different workstations of employees.

One case stands out from the rest; business B. BW is the only woman that does much of the practical heavy work within the business. She has always taken care of the cattle and it has not changed since BM took out his pension. She would like BM to help more since she feels caring for the cattle is a too heavy chore for her these days. BW states that it was the intent when BM took out his pension, stating: “the idea is that you¹ were to help a bit more.” BM does not agree with this entirely, he states: “the idea was to be able to help a bit more and then to put some more time into the forestry.” BM also feels that he does help out with the cattle more now than before.

Even though the women do some practical work, the men are the only ones who drive the tractor and operate heavy machinery. This is the case in couple A, B, D, F, G, H, I, J, K and L. It is all but two cases, ten out of the twelve couples. The only couples not operating in this way is couples C and E. CM takes care of the cultivation but CW drives some tractor and primarily the loading machine. Business E does not operate heavy machinery. Their heaviest machine is their label machine, which EM always operates. Before when business E had cows and more land, EW was a part of the cultivation and operated their heavy machinery.

The man being the practical one is a pattern seen in many businesses, not just, because they are the ones who operate heavy machinery. As an example HM state, “I’m more hands-on, you might say, like outside” and KW says about their division that “[KM] does the practical stuff”. Both H and K are businesses that actually share the practical work even though the men operate the heavy machinery.

Couple E, H and K have reflected upon how their way of dividing the work makes them vulnerable. In business E, the partners have discussed that when they do the thing each of them is best at they save time. In contrary EW puts it: “though it is not so good, you get a bit too vulnerable.” If EM is not in the factory EW cannot operate the label machine. Much of the chores done in business H, both HW and HM do. Consequently, HW is then not worried for the business if something would happen with HM. Since KW and KM are working so much outside the business, they feel it is necessary for both of them to know all the routines with the cows.

Conclusively the result shows that women in the study play a smaller role than the men in the practical work. It is especially seen in who operates heavy machinery, like tractors. Some of the women have a supporter role of any kind.

6.1.2 Administration

In six of the businesses the woman alone takes care of accounting and paperwork, it is business C, D, H, I, J and K. The man in all these businesses still takes care of what can be seen as some administrative work. It is for example purchases, like fodder, and handling subsidy application. In business K the woman takes care of all the financial issues but KW stress “we still always have a dialogue”.

¹ Referring to BM

The reasons for why these women are responsible for the administration are different. The division in couple K is done since they think it is good if one person is responsible for the accounting, it is a question of quality. HW is responsible since HM is useless with computers and has never been interested in IT. But the division in the business has never been discussed. The same situation is seen in business J; JM has no knowledge of accounting whilst JW started doing it. Moreover, IM puts it “in fact she [IW] is not interested in it, so that's not why”. IM did the accounting in the beginning but since they lived on IMs salary from the business it was a way for IW to help. However, she has never been interested in numbers. In couple D the administration was inherited from DMs mother to DW when the couple took over the business. A difference between IW and DW is that DW was interested in accounting. CW likes numbers and papers and has a great deal of experience of it whilst it was natural for her to take care of the administration.

For couple B, F and L the administration is a male responsibility. The last three couples, A, E and G, have limited administration since they hire professional accounting. The administration that couple E and G still handles they share between the partners. For example in business E where EM makes the invoices and EW sends them out. Couple E also has the division that EW makes all the phone calls whilst EM handles their online store. In business G, the son has taken over the job of sending the invoices. Before when GW and GM had both the invoices and the accounting, they took turns and did the work together. The administration left today is divided as GW handles the papers and GM pays the invoices. Finally, all the financial issues in business A are handled by a sibling to AM. AW sent the invoices before the business expanded but she does not miss it today.

Conclusively the result shows that administration is a work for women more than for men. In six out of the nine couples, the woman is responsible for the administration. The reason for the administration being the responsibility of the woman is in a majority of the businesses outer circumstances. The circumstances are described as the man not being interested, the woman inherited it or just that someone had to do it. CW stands out since she is doing the administrative chores based on that she has professional experience of it.

6.1.3 Domestic work

In ten of the households the women are alone responsible for the domestic work, it is household A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and K. In none of the households in the study, the domestic work is alone the responsibility of the man. KW states she does 90 percent of the domestic work and KM agrees and declares, “I’m like surfing on a shrimp sandwich²”. However, even though the women are responsible for the domestic chores the men can on occasion do some of the chores. Couple A, C and G illustrate this. AM prepares dinner when they are having festivities. AM says he likes to prepare dinner but he does not have the time. He state “I watch *Vem vet mest*³ then” when talking about why AW is the one to prepare dinner in the household. Furthermore, when it is a slow period in the business CM is more involved in his children. Lastly, even though GW handles most of the domestic work she still stress, “we help each other to prepare dinner”.

² A Swedish expression meaning that a person does not have to make an effort because someone else is taking care of the job.

³ *Vem vet mest* is a Swedish television program that is broadcasted every weekday.

In many of the couples, the reason for the women having the domestic work as their responsibility is described as something of a natural state. EW expresses the reason as “It has just become”. EM was never interested in the domestic work. For couple C, their division has always been there. The division has evolved since they worked with their previous jobs. IM stress his somewhat disappointment in their arrangement with saying “Unfortunately that’s the case”. Still the division is nothing that IW and IM have discussed. In household K, they explain that they both can do all the chores but that the arrangement when KW has the responsibility is the arrangement that works best in practical terms. KW also feels that she can do it so when KM comes in from the cows in the evening they can do something together instead of KM for example cleaning then.

In household J and L the domestic work is divided as something that can be considered equal. Note that equality is hard to measure and as Alvesson and Billing (2011, pp 87–89) discusses there is a difference between quantity and quality when it comes to equality. Nonetheless, household J shares the chore with a rolling scheme. Every week they change chores so everyone, even the children, contribute to the household. Before all the work in the household was JW’s chore but she did not cope anymore, so JW and JM decided that this system was better. They also stress that they feel that this system is fairer. Even with this system, JW still buys the groceries and are the one that has to nag a bit when the chores are uncompleted. Furthermore, household L also divides their domestic chores “equal”. They describe themselves as equally involved in the children, which is exemplified by a shared parental leave and a split in picking up and leaving their child at preschool. The one that is home on parental leave is the one who does most of the work in the household. They expresses a difficulty in getting their life-puzzle together: "We would not have gotten our life-puzzle together with two kids if we had not had very kind grandmother and grandfather and a kind uncle."

HM explained their division as HW does most of the domestic work, by “like most women do”. When they then were asked what domestic work they do it may seem that they are more equal than they believe themselves. HW takes care of the cooking since she is very good at it. HM is not a good chef whilst he cleans instead. HW cleans a little to and they share the laundry. The same indications were observed in household F where FW said, “we have more of a traditional division”, meaning that she rather go inside to care of the domestic work. It then turned out that FM does the laundry and shops for groceries while FW cleans, manages the heating and prepare dinner. FW also adds, “Although you⁴ prepare dinner as well”.

In two of the households, C and G, the domestic work is paid. GW goes in from the farm work to do the domestic work. She feels that this arrangement is convenient for their business and respectful for her leisure time. Couple C has the arrangement that those days when someone needs to stay out on the farm CM stays while CW goes inside and does laundry for example. Note that CW also does domestic work on her hours outside of the business.

Conclusively the result shows that the domestic work is a woman’s responsibility. There is an indication that the men are doing more work that is domestic. Household J and L stand out with what might be seen as a more equal approach to domestic work. The domestic work done by CW and GW are paid either all or to some extent.

⁴ Referring to FM.

6.2 Involvement in the decision-making process

“It is so clear to the two of us who should do what when we make decisions.” – JW

6.2.1 Strategic decisions

All but two couples emphasize that strategic decisions are discussed between the partners. Couple D and I are where strategic discussions are not a part of their routines. LW is involved in the strategic decisions very limited. As strategic decisions the interviewees refer for example as larger investments in machines, acquisitions of estate or a change in the production or business type. Furthermore, couple A, B, G, I and K express the entire family's involvement in a strategic decision. GM still points out that GW and GM is the ones to make the final strategic decision since their children is not owners of the business. Couple G has what they call an open discussion about strategic decisions and a joint vision.

Couple E and H stress the need for a joint vision so that both partners can make quick decisions for the business if necessary. Both couples E and H also stress the need to give the other partner legitimacy in their decision. After a decision is taken the other partner is informed. EW explains it as “in some areas you have to trust each other, that you do what you're supposed to but in the larger decisions, it is good if you have made them together”. EW continues by stating that it becomes more enjoyable to work when they trust each other. EM then says that a joint decision leads to that they both work for the same thing. He also feels a joint decision is good because “if you have made a decision together and it goes really bad, it feels a little better”. In business H both the partners share the view that they discuss decisions a lot. HW explains it as “you talk about it a lot” whilst HM expresses it as “we talk about everything, you know”.

A joint vision is expressed also in other couples. BM states “the more long-term vision we have to discuss together”. Couple F stress that large investments is necessary to talk over. Furthermore, when they are going to final fell FM takes FW out and asks whether she support his idea of what to harvest or if she has other ideas. He states, “It's not like I decide that this is what we are going to harvest”. Couple K state it is necessary to have a joined visions since both KW and KM want to work home at the farm. In couple K there is always a lively discussion when a new investment is upon them. Sometimes there is a discussion that maybe they should make an investment and sometimes KM has already found a suitable investment that he feels they should proceed with. Once an investment is carried out, they have always agreed upon it.

In business A, AM has the mandate to take all the decisions concerning investments within machinery. But other investments and changes in the production they discuss together in the family. In business C it is the budget that controls whether an investment can be made. Both CW and CM express that they like the straight-forwardness that gives. With more existential issues they have the discussions at home, to not involve the employees.

Couple J has reflected upon how they want their financial discussions to proceed. JM does not have any knowledge of the financial situation because it makes him ponder. Instead, they have decided that JM is to ask JW if there is room for an investment. Upon discussing JW is more considered whether there is a need, while JM is more concerned if they can afford an investment.

Conclusively the result shows that strategic decisions are discussed in all but two businesses (D and I). To be able to make the operative decisions separately the businesses stress the need for a joint vision and discussions about the development of the business.

6.2.2 Operative decisions

The operative decisions are frequently split between the partners and their respective working areas. The interviewees refer their operative decisions as the everyday decisions, for example concerning insemination, fodder purchases or orders. In business D, I and L the men handle all the operative decisions. JW illustrates their division by stating, “he knows it so much better” and “I don’t have the knowledge, really” about that JM takes the operative decisions with the cows. In business A there is a clear distinction in who makes the decisions. AW is in charge in the packing facility whilst AM makes the decision within the cultivation. In business F, FM handles the everyday work and decisions in the forest. HM expresses a wish that the operating decisions they make individually would increase, and especially the decisions that HM feel HW could make on her own.

The partners in business C share the operative decisions concerning the hens whilst CW takes decisions concerning the administration and CM the cultivation. Couple B and E also expresses that they talk about almost every decisions. In business E the dialogue of the operative decisions are ongoing and consistent. Once business B’s vision is decided, BW takes the decisions concerning the cattle on her own. BM illustrated this by saying, “[BW] is the manager at the animal division”. However, BM is not more involved in the decisions concerning the cattle now than he was before he took his pension out. BM takes operative decision with the cultivation and the forestry but when planning the forestry BW is involved.

Couple K state that with investments under 5000 SEK they have given each other the right to make an individual decision. The operative parts in which they take decisions individually are the administration for KW and the cultivation and insemination for KM. A similar situation is seen in business G where GW and GM individually make the operational decisions within their area, the area for GW being insemination and for GM the cultivation.

Conclusively the operative decisions are often discussed even though the respective partner makes the decisions within their area. In three businesses the man is exclusively taking the operative decisions.

6.2.3 Exclusion

On occasion the women feel or actually is left out of the decision-making process. AW feels that the decisions in the business sometimes are taken without her involvement. A decision is taken without her knowledge and she is only informed about it afterwards. AW then often wonders, “Is that thought through?” When it is a decision about an investment that AW has not been a part of AM expresses that it is never about a lot of money. AW still think that all money is important and she feels left out. The case is never reverse, that AW takes a decision without AM’s involvement.

Even though couple B expresses that they talk through every decision it may be the case that BM is the one who makes the final decision. The underlying reasons for this are threefold. Firstly, there is a notion that BW wanted to cut back on cattle for some time since she cannot take care of the heavy work anymore. BW expresses that she is the one doing the heavy work

with the cattle whilst she is the one that needs a cutback. Still this cutback did not happen until recently. Secondly, there is a notion that BW wanted BM to decide to isolate the pipes for the water to the cattle. BW feels she has spent too much time dealing with frozen water in the winter. Thirdly, BW feels she got a bit overshadowed when they invested in another property. BW had rather not invested the money since she felt that the workload on both her and BM was overwhelming. Today the farm is a part of their business and the workload is more normal BW states. The larger investments they make today are further discussed to the point where they have taken a collective decision. BW also states that she still speaks her mind when she does not support a proposed investment.

Couples D and I have similarities since the woman is not involved in the operating decision-making nor have a high involvement in the strategic decision-making. In neither of the couples, the woman is asked for advice. The men keep track of the financial situation even though it in both couples is the woman who makes the accounting. In the decision-making process DW state, she often listens but does not understand much, which leads to their division that DM makes the strategic decisions. DM states the reason for the division as “it just sprung automatically in some way”. DW also says she feels it is best if “He⁵ who understands the tractor” also decides over it. In couple I, IW might not know about a decision until it is already made. IW states herself that “you’ve heard the discussions, that something is underway”. Instead, IM makes the decisions both in the operating and the strategic part of the business with their sons. Both IW and IM say that IW does not want to be a part of the decision-making process. IW states, “I don’t strive to be that involved”.

In couple L, the operating decisions are divided as with couple D and I, LM handles them. LW expresses it as “It’s [LM’s] business, it’s he who decides, it’s his farm”. In the event of an investment, they would both be involved in the decision. LM would have asked LW for advice, as he states it: “We had talked about it quite a lot, I think, very much even”. LW agrees that they would have discussed strategic decisions.

Conclusively the result shows that in three of the businesses (D, I and L) the women have little involvement in the decisions concerning the business. For two of these businesses (D and I) the woman has a function in the business but in one case (L) the woman is not involved other than as an advisory when it comes to strategic decisions. AW and BW express the feeling that they sometimes are left out of the decision-making process.

⁵ Referring to DM

7 Analysis and discussion

In the analysis and discussion the results are put in relation to the theory and the literature review.

7.1 Division of labor

Gender affects what kind of profession people are drawn to (Alvesson & Billing, 2011). Hirdman (1988) calls this the separation of the gender and also state that when people are keeping the profession they are assumed to have they are rewarded by society and themselves. In this study, the separation of work are seen in that the men are associated with the practical work even though it in many of the businesses is shared between the woman and the man. The women are evidently not assumed to have the practical job of the farmer and both the man and the woman seem to try to overshadow it. The finding is consistent with Flygare (1999) arguing that the practical work of the woman are considered less important than the work of the man. Breaching a norm is according to Thomsson (2003b) costly whilst it might be the explanation for the couples not wanting to acknowledge the woman as a practical person. The underlying reason for that the woman is not seen as a practical person is explained by the A-B melody and the A-a melody by Hirdman (2001). The A-B melody since the women are supposed to do the opposite of the thing the man is doing, which is the practical work in this case. The A-a melody since even though the women are doing practical work she is assumed to not do it as good as the man since she is not recognized for it.

BW and CW does with their functions as managers touch a masculine area since Alvesson and Billing (2011) argue that leadership and management is seen as something masculine. BW represents this by her spouse recognizing her as a manager. CW has a managing position since she alone leads the work in the hen house. They are with their management challenging the separation of the gender system (Hirdman, 2001). However they may not challenge the hierarchy in the gender system (Hirdman, 2001) since it could be that BW and CW have to act more like a man to gain their position and the acceptance of it, as discussed by Simrell King (1995). If the women were to put their femininity on hold to gain the position of manager, they would legitimize the male norm within management and leadership.

Martz's (2006) study in Canada shows that the women took on more traditional masculine work, which can also be seen in these businesses since many of them share some of the practical work. The change is especially seen in business B where BW alone does the heavy work with the cattle. The women doing more practical work is in line with the conclusions by Flygare (1999). How the businesses divide the practical work does not only confirm the findings of Martz (2006) and Flygare (1999), they also contradict. The empirical result is contradictory since only one woman, CW, operates heavy machinery. This is more in line with the findings of Gasson and Winter (1992) which states in their study that the men were more likely than their spouses to be in charge of machines, whether it was on the field, with milking or with maintenance. BW and CW are challenging the gender norms by taking on heavy work. Moreover, the women that share the practical work with their men are all challenging the gender norms. They are challenging the male norm in the hierarchy (Hirdman, 1988) by breaking the norm of the male farmer (Javefors Grauers, 2003).

Martz (2006) also expresses that the younger famers in the Canadian study were more open to a change in who does the traditionally masculine work. In this study, the age does not seem to

be a contributing factor for the division of the practical labor. In the four youngest couples, (C, J, K and L) two couples share the practical work and one woman, CW, operates heavy machinery. In the four oldest spouses, (A, B, E and I) three couples share the practical work and in one couple, the man does all the practical work.

Even though women take on more practical work Flygare (1999) states that the women still have the responsibility of the domestic work. The separation (Hirdman, 1988) can be seen in which partner does the domestic work; in ten of the businesses the responsibility lies on the woman. The domestic work still being a woman's work is inline with the situation in Canada (Martz, 2006). The domestic work is not a profession but still a work that these women evidently, in contrast to the men, end up doing. The reason for the women being responsible for the domestic work in many of the couples is expressed as something that just happened. The individuals have not reflected on why this division of responsibility has occurred. The not-reflection is relatable to the invisible hand of the norm system (Thomsson, 2003a) and the gender system (Hirdman, 1988). This gives that it probably is norms and traditions that have given this natural state for responsibilities. The individuals not reflecting upon why things are the way they are is in line with that the society rewards and gives power to the ones following the norms and tradition, which makes it unrewarding to breach the system.

Within the domestic work, individual JM and LM are examples of changing gender norms. They are sharing the domestic work with their partner as something that can be interpreted as equal. Individual FM and HM are also making a substantial contribution to the work in the household but in their case, they do not experience themselves as part of the domestic work. FM and HM are evidence of the A-a melody (Hirdman, 2001) and the price for breaching the system (Thomsson, 2003b) since they do not want to be recognized as someone doing the woman's, lower status, domestic work. The price for breaching the system might be too high for FM and HM but maybe not for JM and LM, which state they do domestic work.

The study by Martz (2006) explores the indication that the farming men may take on more of the domestic work because of a changing society. The partners in J and L are the youngest ones in the study, with an average age of 44 respectively 39 years, which could be an explanation for their more equal division of the domestic work. Martz (2006) argues that the younger, in contrast to older, farmers in Canada had been more influenced by the debate on gender in society. The argument could be the case also in Sweden since three of the eight couples, which had a traditional division of the domestic work, is all over 60. What talks against the argument applying to Sweden is that couples G and K, which both have an average age of 47 and is third and fourth youngest couple, still have a traditional division of the domestic work.

Domestic work cannot be considered contributing to the development of the business. Instead, it can be seen as a supportive function, in line with Bjursell and Melin (2011). The domestic work is unpaid in all but two couples. Paid domestic work is fully practiced in couple G while some the domestic work that CW does is paid with working hours from the business. When women does an unpaid work it leads according to Bjursell and Melin (2011) to a more invisible role in the business. Flygare (1999) also express that the work of women, such as domestic work, had a lower status whilst it could be the reason for the work still being unpaid in most of the businesses.

CW expresses that she has a supportive role and DW and IW can be considered having a supportive role (Bjursell & Melin, 2011). With DW and IW, the supportive role does not

contribute to the development of the business, rather to its survival. All three of the women takes care of the administration and are responsible for the family. Both administration and taking care of family are associates with traditional functions by women in family businesses (Bjursell & Melin, 2011). The administrative work of the business still being the woman's work is in line with findings of Gasson and Winter (1992).

Unpaid work like domestic work and supportive functions like administration shows both the separation of the gender and the hierarchy (Hirdman, 1988; 2001). The separation since only women are working with supportive roles. Business B could be the exception here but since BW still takes care of all the domestic work and BM still does the practical work on the field and in the forest the couple still apply to the separation and hierarchy. The separation (Hirdman, 1988; 2001) is seen in that women do one chore and the men do another chore, the melody of A-B is present. The hierarchy and the A-a melody (Hirdman, 2001) is seen in that the domestic work is unpaid in all but one and a half business, giving that the chores the women do are valued lower than the chores the men do.

Javefors Grauers (2003) express that when women do the complementary activities they are becoming more invisible than the man. The argument of the invisible woman is supported in a historic Swedish view by Flygare (1999), stating that women have been the invisible farmers. The invisibility leads to a power asymmetry that legitimize the man as the norm at a farm, a hierarchy presents itself. Legitimizing the male norm leads, according to Hirdman (2001), to a larger separation of the sexes. A separation (Hirdman, 1988) which then communicates that women and men are expected to work with different things in the business. And the circle continues since this separation fuels the power relation and the male norm in the hierarchy (Hirdman, 1988).

7.2 Involvement in the decision-making process

The kind of supportive role that DW and IW have is not any formal role in the business which may, according to Bjursell and Melin (2011), lead to them not being part of the decision-making process. The women having a supporter role shows that there is a hierarchy (Hirdman, 2001) between the woman and the man in these businesses; the woman may not be valued for her opinions.

DW and IW are not involved in the strategic decisions or in the operative. Additionally, IW express that she does not strive to be involved in the decisions in the business. The argument about a supportive role may lead to that the women are left out of the decision-making process is contradicted by the experience of AW and BW. They do not have supportive roles in the businesses but still have on occasion felt left out of the decision-making process. AW and BW's situation may then not depend upon the immediate hierarchy in the businesses. Instead, their situation could be explained by the male norm in the A-a melody (Hirdman, 2001). Business C is also contradicting the argument and the theory since CW experience she has a supportive role but she is involved in both the operative and the strategic decisions.

The situation is more in line with the argument of Javefors Grauers (2000); even though the women are active in the decisions-making process they still are not representing the business and they have an invisible role. If the situation is present in the businesses the women experience the A-a melody of Hirdman (2001) saying that the women are the second individual since she is not good enough to represent the business. The woman is active in the decision-making in ten businesses but they are still not representing the business in terms of

who is experienced doing the practical work, confirming the argument. In nine businesses the woman is involved in both the strategic and operative decision, whilst the argument by Javefors Grauers (2000) about invisibility can be considered denied. Scratching the surface of the empirical findings shows that both the partners stress that strategic decision is taken jointly and that the respective partner then carries out some or all of the operative decisions. In those businesses where the woman handles the administration, the woman then makes operative decisions regarding the administration. As discussed in the paragraphs above working with administration is merely a supportive function. Taking account for the man making the operative decisions in the businesses primary activity in four of the twelve businesses, the woman's role in the operative decision-making process becomes further invisible in those four businesses.

The result from the study implying the woman is more invisible than the man in the strategic decisions can be compared to the findings of Gasson and Winter (1992). They argue that the women in their study practice less power than their spouses when making a strategic decision. Business K and F can illustrate the power relation by that it often is the man who presents a strategic decision but in both cases, they stress that they take the decision jointly in the end. Furthermore, ten of the businesses stress they discuss and take strategic decisions together. Gasson and Winter (1992) conclude in their research that two out of six farmers involved their wife in large financial decisions. The results here shows that five out of six involved their wife in the strategic decisions, with one woman not being a wife but still involved in the strategic decisions. The situation within the businesses in Sweden, 22 years after the study was made in Great Britain, is more equal in this aspect. The findings of the empirical study are more in line with the research of Martz (2006), where the spouses were more likely to take strategic decisions together than apart.

The operative decisions the women and men take in the empirical study are confirming some parts of the research by Martz (2006). In the research by Martz (2006), the men were more likely to make operative decisions concerning the practical work. In the empirical study where the practical work are split the spouses both take decisions, either together or in their respective work area. In the four businesses where the practical work is not shared with the woman the men also makes the operative decision in the practical area. Gasson and Winter (1992) showed in their study that one man in four took operative decisions jointly with their wife. Within this study the results are opposite; one in four couples does not share the operative decisions. In contrast the women are responsible for the operative decisions in the domestic work, including the family, in eleven of the twelve businesses. In the research by Martz (2006), the women were more likely to take operative decisions concerning the household and the family, confirming the findings of the results. The A-B melody and the separation by Hirdman (2001) is present within who makes decisions in what areas; the areas are not the same for women and men.

Furthermore, Gasson and Winter (1992) suggest that if the woman work outside the business it affect her involvement in the decisions-making process negatively. In the empirical study this is illustrated by couple I where the woman's involvement in the decisions is highly limited. The argument are contradicted by business D and to some extent A and B since the women in the businesses does not work outside the business but are still left out, or experience that they are left out, of the decision-making process. The argument also seems to be the contradicted in business H and J since the women in the businesses are also working outside the business but are still involved in the decisions-making process.

Gasson and Winter (1992) also conclude in their study that when both the spouses work outside the business the woman is more consulted in the decision-making. Business F, G and K are evidence of this from the empirical study. In these businesses, both the partners earn some living outside the business but the women are involved in both the operative and the strategic decisions. Business L contradicts the argument since they both earn some living outside the business but LW is only limitedly involved in the strategic decision and not involved at all in the operative decisions.

7.3 Final discussion

The division of labor in the businesses shows that the couples are saturated with the same gender norms as society as a whole. The result confirms the findings of Javefors Grauers (2003) and Gasson and Winter (1992). Since the agricultural setting in which the couples function is a part of the society as a whole they are bound to be influenced, so the finding is rather straightforward. Martz (2006) expresses that the farmers in Canada are affected by the financial, political, and norm changes in society. These changing gender norms are also seen in the couples in this study, with the shared practical work and the more equally divided domestic work.

Furthermore, couples E, H and K have reflected upon their divisions of work. They have discussed how their division of chores affects them as individuals, their business and whether they need to do anything about it. The results from their reflection are that couple E has started the process of sharing the work more to become less vulnerable. Couples H and K has already come to the point where they share much of the practical work whilst they still do not share the administrative work nor the responsibility of the domestic work. The couples are with their reflecting questioning how the gender norms affect them.

The decision-making process follows the same pattern of gender norms as the divisions of labor. When a person is responsible for a working area they also make the operative decisions within that area, showing the separation between the man and women (Hirdman, 2001). Where the practical work is shared between the partners the operative decision are also shared. The women of the study are more involved in the strategic decisions than in the operative decision, in line with the findings of Gasson and Winter (1992). Working outside the own business does not seem have an overall affect of the women's involvement in the decisions-making process.

7.4 Generalization, validity, and reliability

The results from the study cannot be generalized into the entire population of family businesses in the agricultural setting. This was however never the purpose of this case study. Instead, the intent with the case study was to show shared and non-shared features of the twelve businesses in the study and to make analytical generalization between the cases and the theory (see Robson, 2011).

The validity and reliability in the study is a challenge, as with all flexible designs (Robson, 2011). The validity of the study is considered good since the starting point for the analytical tools is the frame of reference. Hence, the conclusions drawn about the division of labor and involvement in the decision-making process are based upon the concept equality.

For a higher reliability in the data the method could have included separated interviews with the partners in the businesses. The partners could then have been each other's triangulation on the questions concerning them both. Separate interviews were intended but it was poorly communicated to the interviewees, which is why this only fully took place in two cases. In one of these cases where the interviews were held separately the partners answered different on the question concerning ownership. In another business, it was told by external sources that the partners were untruthful about their ownership. Since the ownership was not further analyzed then displayed in the empirical background, it may not contribute to a wrongful conclusion. It may still be a challenge that the couple could have been untruthful in more questions.

8 Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to explore men and women's engagement in family businesses in an agricultural setting. The study shows that the individuals in the businesses break the gender norm in many situations. Those women in the study that are active in the practical work and in the decision-making process are breaking the norms of the man being the leader and the practical individual. Still, the men are associated with the practical work, even in those businesses where the practical work is shared between the woman and the man.

Gender norms influence the division of labor in agricultural family business in the same way it does in the whole society. The labor in the businesses is, simplified, divided as the men operate the heavy machinery and the women take care of the domestic work. It is more likely for the woman than the man to be responsible for the administration.

Gender norms influence the involvement in the decision-making process of agricultural family businesses in a way that the women sometimes are left out of the decision-making process. In two of the businesses the woman is not involved in the decision-making process at all. In the other businesses the women are more involved in the strategic decisions than in the operative decisions.

Few of the couples have reflected upon how their traditional division of labor and involvement in the decisions-making process are affecting them as individuals, their businesses and the society. The businesses could with this be using their resources in an ineffective way. Not reflecting could also mean that they are contributing to an undemocratic and an unjust society.

8.1 Further research

The division of labor and involvement in the decisions-making process could be affected by more than the gender norms. The education level of the interviewees could have a significant effect. As I intuitively see a relation between gender awareness and education and social class. Another factor that could potentially affect the division of labor and in turn the involvement in the decision-making process is the size of the business. A larger business with many employees are not run the same way as a small-scale business. Hence, the involvement in the decisions-making process and the divisions of labor could be different.

The division of labor in the household has briefly been explored in this thesis and it is my opinion that this part needs to be further explored. I see a problematic balance between working in the business and doing the work in the household. Furthermore, it would be a development to explore how women combine their unremunerated work with professional work outside their own business.

Moreover, the context of the study is highly limited and it would be a development of this thesis to take more account for it. Additionally, ethnicity is not taken into account, which could be a development of this study.

Lastly, it could also be a development to further investigate the femininity among the women operating in an agricultural setting. What does the presence of a strong male norm do to the women's femininity?

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Appendix 1 – Translated interview questions

Theme: Background information

Tell me about yourself.

How old are you?

Are you married or cohabitating?

Do you work outside the business?

Tell me about the business.

What is the production/service?

Have there been any changes to the business differentiation?

What is the legal form of the business?

How is the ownership divided?

Is anyone else also involved in owning the business?

Are they also included in the decision-making?

How does a "normal" day look like for you?

Theme: Division of labor

How does the dividing of chores in the business look like?

What do you do together and separately?

How was the division determined?

How does the dividing of chores in the private sphere look like?

What do you do together and separately?

How was the division determined?

Theme: Involvement in the decision-making process

What kinds of decisions are made individually and which do you do together?

Are you consulting the other partner often, even if it is one of you who take the final decision?

Do you feel involved in the decisions taken in the business?

How do you work with conversations about decisions?

Appendix 2 – Translated quotes

AW

”Är det genomtänkt det där?”
“Is that thought through?”

AM

”Jag tittar på *Vem som vet mest* då.”
“I watch *Vem som vet mest* then.”

BW

”Tanken är att du skulle hjälpa till lite mer.”
“The idea is that you⁶ were to help a bit more.”

BM

”Tanken var att kunna hjälpa till lite mer och sen kunna lägga lite mer tid i skogen.”
“The idea was to be able to help a bit more and then to put some more time into the forestry.”

”Den mer långsiktiga inriktningen måste vi diskutera tillsammans.”
“The more long-term vision we have to discuss together.”

”[BW] är ju arbetsledare på djurdelen.”
“[BW] is the manager at the animal division.”

CW

”Det blir lite traditionellt sådär att jag supportar när det är väldigt intensivt.”
“It becomes a bit traditional, I’m supporting when it is very intense.”

DW

”Han som begriper traktorn.”
“He⁷ who understands the tractor.”

DM

”Det bara flöt automatiskt på något vis.”
“It just sprung automatically in some way.”

EW

”Det har bara blivit.”
“It has just become.”

”Inom vissa området måste man lita på varandra, att man gör vad man ska men i de stora besluten är det nog bra om man har tagit dem tillsammans.”
“In some areas you have to trust each other, that you do what you’re supposed to but in the larger decisions, it is good if you have made them together.”

”Fast det är egentligen inte bra, man blir lite för sårbar.”
“Though it is not so good, you get a bit too vulnerable.”

⁶ Referring to BM

⁷ Referring to DM

EM

”Har man tagit ett beslut tillsammans och det går åt helvete så känns det lite bättre.”
“If you have made a decision together and it goes really bad, it feels a little better.”

FW

”Vi har en lite mer traditionell uppdelning.”
“We have more of a traditional division.”

”Fast du lagar också mat.”
“Although you⁸ prepare dinner as well.”

FM

”Det är inte så att jag bara bestämmer att nu ska vi avverka det.”
“It’s not like I decide that this is what we are going to harvest.”

GW

”Det var tvunget, det var ju bara vi två.”
“It was necessary, it was just the two of us.”

”Vi hjälps åt att laga mat”.
“We help each other to prepare dinner.”

HW

”Man pratar ju mycket om det.”
“You talk about it a lot”

HM

”Jag är mera så praktisk, kan man säga, liksom så ute.”
“I’m more hands-on, you might say, like outside.”

”Så som de flesta kvinnor gör.”
“Like most women do.”

”Vi talar ju om allting.”
“We talk about everything, you know.”

”[HW] och jag har hela tiden, vad det än gäller, gör var och en det som vi är lämpade för. Jag tvingar inte henne att köra traktor.”
“[HW] and I have always, no matter what it is about, each of us do what we are intended to do. I do not force her to drive the tractor.”

IW

”Man har hört diskussioner, att det är på gång.”
“You’ve heard the discussions, that something is underway.”

”Jag strävar inte efter att vara så delaktig.”
“I don’t strive to be that involved.”

⁸ Referring to FM.

IM

”Egentligen så är hon inte intresserad av det, så det är inte därför.”

“In fact she is not interested in it, so that's not why.”

”Tyvärr är det så.”

“Unfortunately that's the case.”

JW

”Det är så självklart mellan oss vem som ska göra vad när vi tar beslut.”

“It is so clear to the two of us who should do what when we make decisions.”

”Han kan det så mycket bättre.”

“He knows it so much better.”

”Jag kan ju inte det här, egentligen.”

“I don't have the knowledge, really.”

KW

”Sen har vi alltid en dialog.”

“We still always have a dialogue.”

”[KM] kör med det här praktiska.”

“[KM] does the practical stuff.”

KM

”Jag glider på en räkmacka.”

“I'm like surfing on a shrimp sandwich⁹.”

LW

”Vårt livspussel hade vi inte fått ihop med två barn om vi inte hade haft väldigt snälla farmor och farfar och en snäll farbror.”

“We would not have gotten our life-puzzle together with two kids if we had not had very kind grandmother and grandfather and a kind uncle.”

”Det är [LMs] företag, det är han som bestämmer, det är hans gård.”

“It's [LM's] business, it's he who decides, it's his farm.”

LM

”Vi hade pratat om det ganska mycket tror jag, väldigt mycket till och med.”

“We had talked about it quite a lot, I think, very much even.”

⁹ *Glida på en räkmacka* is a Swedish expression meaning that a person does not have to make an effort because someone else is taking care of the job.