



# MAPPING THE VALUES OF FARMERS IN SWEDEN AND GREECE

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Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences  
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# *MAPPING THE VALUES OF FARMERS IN SWEDEN AND GREECE*

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## Abstract

In the EU, some farmers depend farming for their livelihoods, while others use the land for other reasons, e.g., to embrace a new, more environmentally friendly lifestyle. But regardless of their approach to land use, farmers' choices are affected by the various actors of the sector and by society as farmers are an inseparable part of both. Such effects are in some cases perceptible and in some not so, but they are part of the mechanism that composes farmers' cognitive selves and that defines to an extent the orientation of their values. This exogenous and endogenous influence that is followed by the co-construction of one's cognitive self can be seen also in the values expressed by farmers on subjects other than the narrow choice of how and what to farm. Their own definition of what constitutes a good farmer and their view of themselves regarding nature and their relationship with it are a direct result of this. This paper examines and contrasts farmers' values elicited through qualitative interviews in Sweden and Greece. The values expressed were mapped and analysed to identify and discuss a range of related concepts such as ideas of the good farmers and what inhibits or motivates them, their unique relationship with nature that is reflected in their practice as 'businesspeople' or 'stewards'. The values revealed by the analysis, in combination with the different contexts in which the interviewees were situated, reflected their practice and allow insights into the sector and its people.

Keywords: farm, farmers, values, environment, social psychology.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Within academia, and in the policy design sectors, there is an open-ended conversation about the present transition in the agricultural sector, with the EU and western societies being in the midst of transitioning. According to this conversation, a shift is occurring with the main purpose of farmers moving from exclusively food and fiber production to engage a more diverse set of important aspects related to their practice and the environment (Evans 2010). A paradigm of this transition in the sector is the eco-schemes, part of the green architecture of the CAP. This new element of the eco-schemes aims to motivate farmers to embrace climate and environment-friendly practices through direct payments (Agriculture and Fisheries Council, 20 July 2020).

This transition can be seen also in the last three decades since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, which included the multifunctional agriculture concept (Renting et al. 2009). This concept has been incorporated ever since in the EU's common agricultural policy in its various stages and programs, for example, the subsidies for promoting organic cultivation of the land (EC, 2019), something that allowed the sector to flourish and grow over the past years. And this is but one of the directions that the sector explored over the last years as it diversifies, with the EU support in agro-tourism, biofuel production, and incorporation of renewable energy production activities.

This paper investigates the grass-root level actors of the agricultural sector the farmers; and it can be included in actor-oriented approaches as described in by Renting et al. (2009). It does take into account not only the function of the farmer as a unit but also the understanding of this unit in environmental issues or subjects and the positioning of it in relation to them, for example, as stewards of nature or as businesspeople, a concept that later on in the paper (Section 7.4) is more thoroughly described and explained.

A farm, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary (2020) is “a tract of land devoted to agricultural purposes” with the primary objective of the farm being the production of food and other crops and acting as the basic facility in food production.

This leaves plenty of room for the different uses of the land and defines alongside with the specialization of the production the type of the farm, e.g., vegetable farms, fruit farms, dairy, pig, goat, and poultry farms, and arid land that is dedicated to the

production of fibers (Gilg & Battershill 1998). In addition to that definition, the type of cultivation can take many forms. A farm is labelled as conventional when there artificial fertilizers and pesticides are used (Aune 2012), and as organic (Lotter 2003) in the absence of them. Furthermore, there is regenerative agriculture (Rhodes 2012) that aims to regenerate the environment in the in question plot of land. Lastly, permaculture (Ferguson & Lovell 2014) is also one of the choices that some make intending to take cooperation to the plant level instead of the use of artificial fertilizers and allowing the land to keep storing CO<sub>2</sub> as it keeps producing. But there is no limit really as one can combine aspects and adopt a practice that combines more than one choice, and cultivate the land differently in different plots. As described above, the agricultural sector over the last decades has been in a reevaluation and new functions have been assigned to it. As those new ideas and understanding of the sector arise, some adjusted in this new multifunctional frame and some failed to do so. This can be attributed to an extension to their capacity to adjust and the national frame of support for that. And as this paper examines two groups of farmers, variations on those frames exist and their effect is mapped out to some extent to the data collection and analysis further down.

This increasing demand on farmers, by organisations, society, and consumers, on branching out their activities to include environmental concerns affects them greatly. This can be seen in changes in the legal frames both on the national and transnational levels. This communication that takes place over time affects not only in their mode of production but as it happens affects them in the level of their values that the current farmers have and change or not, or as the new farmers enter the sector.

## 2. AIM

Many actors, including policymakers, consumers and large corporations, in the wider agricultural sector have the potential to influence farmers' values related to production and the choices they make. Those values are the subject of negotiation, and thus are thus susceptible to those influences. But values are important mainly because is the way that people justify and explain their actions in the past and their intentions for the future. As such an understanding can be obtained about past and present actions and perhaps educated guesses can be made about the future.

Several studies on agricultural change driven by those powerful actors are contributing to the effort to comprehend the situation and the changes taking place (Wilson 2009). This is important as the transnational frame of the EU attempts to help the agricultural sector with various policies and taking into account values, those policies can be more effective as they can be more targeted. Those changes are the umbrella of the subsidy system that the geographical space of the EU implemented on its agricultural sector, the idea of how the rural should be in accordance to CAP, and the societal changes that occurred while environmental concerns were raised by the consumers on how agriculture should be like (Wilson 2009). However, it is essential to grasp also the grassroots perspective on those changes in the agricultural sector and on the farmers themselves (Wilson 2009). For this reason, this paper focuses on the values that farmers connect to their activities.

At this point, I wish to link the subject of this paper and the choice of the value approach to the subject of environmental communication. The agricultural sector activities are most certainly part of the human activities that are in a direct effect on the environment. And as mentioned above the various actors are in constant, direct, and indirect, communication, the outcome of which can be seen in the mapping of the farmers' values. This shaping and alteration that occurs are important.

Furthermore, with this thesis, I have an overall desire to explore, within the limits of my sample size, the prioritization of those values in and between the different contexts of the two national groups of farmers, from Sweden and Greece. Values have an effect on their choices and in the molding of their practice.

To reach the aim, the following questions will guide my thesis as they guided my fieldwork:

- What values do farmers express when talking about farming?
- How do these values relate to their ideas about the environmental aspects and impacts of farming?
- How are their values connected to their normative ideas related to farming, for example, ideas related to what 'good farming' means?
- What do their values shape their practices and how is this embedded in their reasoning?

### 3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There is a good portion of academic research that takes into account the values of the farmers and the effect that those values have. Some are even using the Schwartz Value Survey to examine their work.

I must also state that concepts under further examination further down in the paper like the concept of the good farmer or the human-nature relationship or the view of one's self to nature have been examined by others.

An example is Sutherland (2013). She examines the idea of the good farmer as understood by the farmers themselves, in the change that occurred in the conversion of land use from conventional to organic and how the idea of the good farmer can be attributed to organic farmers as well as to conventional farmers, in the process of organic cultivation becoming mainstream.

This process of farmers' rejection of each other due to the choice of cultivation offers insight for further understanding of the social mechanism that in time as it changed permitted farmers to change their cultivation and maintaining the good farmer title. This improved understanding of this social mechanism potentially allows the implementation of a policy or a program in the future in a similar context. Not only for the recognition of a barrier but also for means of removing it.

The next example is Kaltenborn and Bjerke (2020). In this paper, human-nature relationships are examined looking at the relationship between life values and attitudes to large carnivores. They did not limit their research to farmers as more stakeholders are included. The paper records the different approaches that the different groups of people have on the subject of the large carnivores while creating a link to their life values. A similarity to their work is that we both use the Schwartz Value Survey but in a different data collection approach and subject.

The nature vs human conflict is documented in their work and it demonstrates the need to take it into account as it is important for the people that work with the land, in this paper sheep farmers. By mapping the values of the stakeholders one can have a view on the collectives' insight and by that, understand how to proceed most thoroughly and effectively to address the issue.

In addition to the above, more work is done in the exploration of external influence in the formulation of the social networks and their behavior in Fundamental values and traditional social networks, also known as *guānxi*, in China (Böhm & Bergmann 2012). Their work deals with the social personal networks that are

present in rural China while aligning this with the necessary changes that the country is implementing in the environmental protection frame. The necessity for change is being tested by the need for implementing targeted agricultural extension program (Rivera 1997) that passes through their values and their personal social networks. And as this paper explains the implementation of the changing rural policy in China that is part of the environmental frame, pass through those social networks and it is met with resistance. The use of the Schwartz Value Survey offered data that recognized differences in the values of different age groups and an increased amount of trust in the under examination personal social networks for acquiring pieces of information in contrast to other sources.

Mapping values to understand the social aspect of the rural is proven to be enlightening, in this case, as it illustrates the path information can take and the barriers that are met. This revealing fact can be crucial in the design of a change.

The use and non-use values of animal welfare in Sweden by (Hansson & Lagerkvist 2015) is one more paper. It examines the correlation of taking into account the will of the government for animal welfare legal frame that is aligned with two of the sector's actors the consumers and an organization for the animal welfare, with the values that the farmers have.

This paper sheds light on the values that the farmers have while making clear connections and links to the reality outside the farms reality, namely to the consumers. Furthermore, the mapping of the farmer's values seems to explain to an extent why and how they make decisions on their farms and what do they take into account when they do.

Lastly, one more example that touches on gender issues in the book *Gender and Rural Globalization* (Stenbacka 2017 p. 201). A values lens is used to unravel women's values specifically in an attempt to understand so that later on policy can further encourage women's participation and gender equality in the agricultural sector. It provides an interesting insight into the subject of the sectors aging population and its male-dominance, and for the policy design and application, that intends change, valuable information.

Mapping values can make a difference. When this is done, it becomes clearer why people choose one way of cultivation over another as in Sutherland (2013), the importance of social networks in the rural areas that on their extent define the importance and the quality of the information like in (Böhm & Bergmann 2012). By the same token, the use of values describes the human-nature relationship and allows the conflict(s) to be redefined as they surface under a new scope, like in (Kaltenborn & Bjerke 2020) wildlife issues and in (Hansson & Lagerkvist 2015) about the welfare of domesticated animals. Lastly, the gender and rural as an issue, is a subject that extends beyond its narrow geographical boundaries of the EU and is a part of the plethora of programs being implemented by organizations under

their auspices in various countries is another important subject. And even though Stenbacka (2017 p. 201) in chapter 9 focus on the geographical space of Sweden, it demonstrates that more is to be learned when expanding the space and by including the values of the farmers.

Of course, given that values do not take simply the Schwartz Value Survey form and farmers? Do not always use the word value I can safely say that there is a robust bibliography that deals with the agricultural sector in various subjects and to a geographical extend.

In summarizing, even though there is a huge number of papers and books, academic and not only, with approaches in the research design, both quantitative and /or qualitative, there is always something new to be learned in the shedding of new light on the use of a new theory.

## 4. THEORY

The ‘theory of basic human value’ (Schwartz 1992) has been created and used for classifying the personal values that are identified, and are common, across cultures and to interpreting their origin. This diagnosis of personal values can explain the diversity and the clash in values (Schwartz 2012). This clash in values amongst individuals or groups in a given context is expressed by values. As the context changes so can our values, as we don’t all neither have the same value or keep them the same. And this clash creates also a new social context reality that needs to be communicated. This need is served by a set of specific values, which act as a mode of communication. This mode is used both by individuals and groups, as both need to cope with the transformation that is happening to themselves as they try to adjust to this while taking into account what is necessary to human existence. The idea is that we humans in a given contextualized circumstance embrace values, both as individuals and in relation to the groups that we belong to. In a way, this selection of values is a mode of communication, as the exchange of information between individuals and inside larger groups, can take the form of adopting or altering, or rejecting a value. Values are the criteria that actively guide the everyday life of the individual. Values can therefore also help us to understand individuals’ attitudes and choices.

Schwartz (1992) considers values as motivational goals, which reflect the most elemental needs of human beings. According to him, they are divided into three primary categories: the biological needs of the individual, the need to coordinate the individuals' actions with others, and the need of the groups to survive and prosper Schwartz (1992) and (2012).

‘The theory of basic human value’, as explained in the previous research section of this paper, has been used by Stenbacka (2017 p. 201) as well as by Hansson & Lagerkvist (2015), Böhm & Bergmann (2012) and Kaltenborn & Bjerke (2020). This is not the limit but a small example that was described and linked with this paper. More work has been done on the level of values, for example by Nordlund & Garvill (2002), Spini (2003), Davidov et al. (2008), Fischer et al. (2010) and Stern et al. (1999). Fischer et al. (2010) use the Schwartz Value Survey, to examine the degree of similarity of the Individual-Level and Country-Level Value Structures of the people. Their research in the value structure, on those levels, verifies to an extent the cultural similarities to people in their value structures across countries



and further enhances my choice to use this approach to the theory. However, it is noted that even with a value structure in a country or cross countries been mapped it does not mean that it will be with no significant differences in the individual level. And even though they conclude that comparison among individuals across countries must be done after the structural is tested for its equality in value amongst individuals of the same country (Fischer et al. 2010), my paper works around this problem as it does not use the same means to approach the subject. All and all the Schwartz Value Survey have been used in the past for a variety of themes and purposes.

I argue that value theory can also be used in this context of this paper. As the farming sector is influenced by various actors, as stated above, from their actions and their communication. The agricultural sector is after all an economic sector with measurable characteristics and an impact on the environment. As people adopt values, in a given context, and under the influence of this communication, this adoption creates an environmental and economic effect. I argue that this influence from the actions and the communication of those actors, consumers, institutions, and more, affect the values of the individual at the grassroots level. To elaborate more on this with an example, changing consumption patterns, affected by the market, adapted in the legal frames from governments, influence the producer's mode of production. The use of this theory provides an insight into the individual's implicit logic in relation to the rest of the actors and nature. While people hold values prioritized in a given context these values can be altered as people become the recipients of information and the subject of other actors' communication.

As farmers make choices and act, the reasoning behind their actions and the explanations that they offer help us to understand how their set of values affects their use of the land. Mapping the values that farmers have, like in this paper in the two countries under examination, is important as it can elucidate why farmers act on various contexts in the way that they do by assigning them values.

Marketing purposes and economic surveys have been some of the approaches that have so far used this theory. Some authors argue that values can affect the appeal of advertising to the audiences (Piiro 2005). And taking this for granted, this theory model becomes important to take values into account when it comes to planning such intercultural campaigns.

Further studies and surveys with the basic human values theory (Schwartz 1992) as one of the theories and tools in their core are the following: A study to measure values (Davidov et al. 2008) is done biennially by the European Social Survey (ESS) (Bilsky et al. 2011).

As it is clear the theory has been used insofar in a variety of subjects and for different purposes but the most important difference of this paper is the data

generation, something that will be more thoroughly explained in Sections 7, 8, and 9.

## 4.1. THE TEN VALUES, PLUS ONE

The content of the ‘theory of basic human value’ acknowledges ten universal values, which can be categorized into four groups that reside above them. Each and every one of those values has a central goal that acts as an underlying inducer (Schwartz 1992, Schwartz 2012).

Those four groups are openness to change, conservation, self-enhancement, and self-transcendence.

**Openness to change**, the first group, can be described by the motive to pursue innovation. Three out of the ten universal values cluster under this first group: self-direction, hedonism, and stimulation.

Self-direction, the first universal value, is described by a person’s motivational goal for independent thought and action. It is expressed by a set of more specific values like creativity, freedom and independence (Schwartz in press).

Hedonism, the second value of this group, is derived from organismic needs, just as self-direction, but differs from it in the motivational goal for pleasure associated with satisfying them (Schwartz in press). Challenges in life, excitement and novelty are the specific values that, as a set, describe this value.

Lastly, stimulation has the motivational goal of the pursuit of pleasure and the gratification of one's self. It derives from the need for variety and stimulation. Pleasure, enjoying life, and happiness are its specific values (Schwartz in press). Despite the importance of happiness as a basic human value, it is not included as one. The absence of a distinct motivational direction does not allow it, as people “pursue happiness through seeking to attain whichever distinct goals they value highly” (Sagiv et al. 2010).

**Conservation**, the second group, as a motivational goal is the preservation of the status quo. Under this, three universal values cluster: conformity, security, and tradition.

Conformity means to restrain actions or inclinations or impulses that are likely to upset or harm others and disturb the current norms. Specific values that express it are obedience, politeness, and self-discipline (Schwartz in press).

Security has as motivational goals safety, harmony and to maintain the stability of the social relationships. Security here is expressed by the following specific values, family security, national security, and a sense of belonging.

Respect, acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides are the motivational goals of Tradition, the last universal value of this group, whose specific values are being humble, accepting one's position in life and respect for tradition (Schwartz in press).

**Self-enhancement** is the third group under which 3 universal values like achievement, power and again, hedonism cluster. Hedonism is appearing again in the third group as it overlaps with openness to change (Schwartz in press).

Motivational goals associated to achievement are the pursuit of personal success and the demonstration of competence according to social standards. The set of values that express are ambition, success, capability, and influence (Schwartz in press).

The motivational goals of social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources, belong to Power. The specific values of wealth, social power, social recognition and authority express this value (Schwartz in press).

**Self-transcendence** is the fourth and last group, and its motivational goals are to promote the welfare of others and nature.

Universalism as one of the ten universal values is expressed by one's specific values broadmindedness, sense of social justice, unity with nature and environmental protection. The motivational goals are the protection of the welfare of all people, and nature, understanding, and appreciation.

The last universal value of Benevolence is expressed by the set of specific values of helpfulness, honesty, forgivingness, responsibility, with the motivational goals being preservation and enhancement of social personal and interpersonal relationships (Schwartz in press).

Spirituality, the plus one value, was considered as an additional eleventh value. However, its presence and the level of it are questionable in all cultures (Schwartz 1992).

Values are an essential part of our self and personality, with a clear distinction from beliefs, attitudes, norms, and traits (Schwartz 2012). Our behaviors and attitudes are critically motivated by our values.

Briefly, I will elaborate on the beliefs, attitudes, norms, and traits so that they would be distinguished from the values that I use in this paper.

Beliefs are defined as the individual's or a group of individuals' convictions that they held in their minds are true. Furthermore, beliefs are a cornerstone for the formulation of attitudes and behavior and can be challenging to change (Anderson et al. 1980). To make it more clear an example, in the past decades, long before science revealed and proved to us that natural resources are not inexhaustible, we held different beliefs as individuals and collectively. As more knowledge became

available and different norms mainstream, over time our beliefs changed and this consequently changed our attitudes and behaviors to the subject.

According to psychology, attitudes are part of the cognitive field of the individual that it is formulated by the individuals' experience or upbringing, and acts as a guiding force of the individuals' behavior. Further elaborating attitude is the set of emotions, behaviors, and beliefs that are directed to an object, person, thing, or set of beliefs (Chaiklin 2011).

Social norms are viewed as collective representations of a code of conduct that is acceptable by groups and individuals alike. They reflect their perceptions of their contact with individuals or part of groups (Lapinski & Rimal 2005). As they can be seen as cultural products, they represent the basic knowledge of the individuals that guide the understanding of the others doing, thinking, and how they should react to it (Cialdini 2003).

Lastly, traits are stable characteristics centered on the individual's behavior, in certain ways. In addition to that, traits can also be the description for individuals or a label if you will, such as honest, intelligent, etc. (Fajkowska & Kreidler 2018).

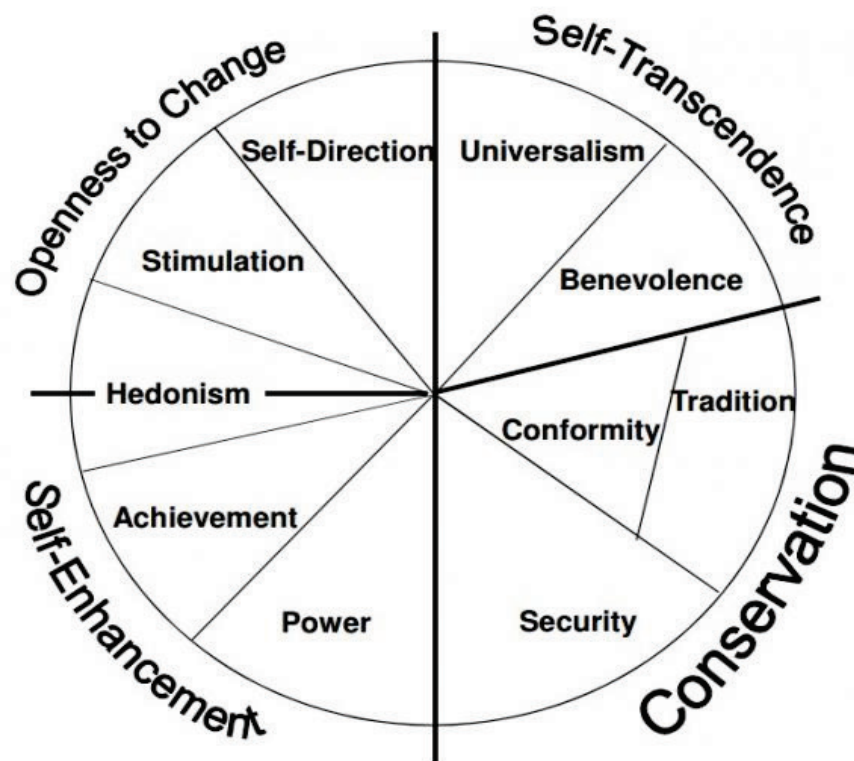


Figure 1: The theoretical model of relations among 10 motivational types of values. (Schwartz, 2020, included with the permission of Professor Shalom H. Schwartz)

As one can see with the help of the scheme, the ten values are arranged and positioned in the space. This scheme is, to my understanding, always steady, as the positioning of the values on it does not change.

The theory also explains how the values are connected and influence each other. This is the result of the fact that the pursuit of any of the values is either in and accordance with each other or in a conflict with another value. For example, looking at the scheme, one cannot have power as a prime value and strive for universalism or benevolence at the same time, or prioritize self-direction and not come in conflict with tradition or conformity.

This circular structure also allows quarters of the circle standing facing and opposing each other to emerge. The first antithesis is openness to change versus conservation, which contrasts independence and obedience, and the second antithesis is self-enhancement versus self-transcendence where the interests of oneself collide with the welfare of others (Schwartz 1992).

Even though the scheme is an efficient way to illustrate one's values, it does not limit one value from the other, as the artificial borders allow the overlapping amongst values. This overlapping occurs from the overlapping motivational emphases. A few examples are, Power and Achievement with a motivational emphasis on social superiority and esteem and, Achievement and Hedonism with a motivational emphasis on self-centered satisfaction, and lastly, Hedonism and Stimulation with a motivational emphasis on a desire for affectively pleasant arousal (Daffin Jr. 2018) The rest of the values follow a similar pattern of overlapping each other with a shared motivational emphasis (Daffin Jr. 2018).

I will conclude this part by clarifying that even though some values in the scheme and the explanation of them, appear to be on opposite sides they do not conflict when an individual is working towards different goals in different time frames. One can very well be striving for power, wealth and social recognition in the public life while, and in other aspects to be guided by the exact opposite, namely universalism.

## 5. THE AGRARIAN CONTEXT

Variations in the climate and the positioning of the two countries in the global north with one in the Mediterranean Sea, alongside cultural differences, affected the agricultural sector of Sweden and Greece.

This effect can be seen also in the shaping of the humans at the social level, referring of course in their values. And the farmers are no exception to that. The much more forgiving climate, at least in the past, that permitted different biological cycles with increased productivity allowed the farmers to over time create different attitudes towards land cultivation, towards the environment, the other farmers, and themselves. And thus, perhaps prioritizing their set of values differently.

As an example, the Greek farmers faced different challenges as better productivity, and variety in their production due to the country's location never forced them to cooperate over and beyond the family level.

The differences in the values amongst the farmers from the two countries that are a result of the above factors, amongst other things, are to be seen further in the paper in the analysis.

### 5.1. SWEDEN AND GREECE IN THE EU

In 2016 in the European Union there were 10.5 million holdings with more than 60% of them being less than 5 ha in size. The total amount of land which was designated for agricultural production, and was in use, was 173 million hectares, almost 40% of the total land of the European Union. And even though the number of farms is in a steady decline, it seems that the amount of land in use by the sector has remained steady. Out of the 10.5 million farms in the EU during 2016, 95.2% falls under the classification of family farms. This large group is responsible for 80% of the workforce of the agricultural sector and approximately 60% of the total agricultural area, of livestock units, and the total agricultural product. Notable is also that in the same year one-third of the managers, farmers, of family farms were above the age of 65 or over that Eurostat (2019).

Overall, one can notice that the agricultural model of the family farm is predominant in the European Countries Eurostat (2019).

But with multifunctionality (Renting et al. 2009) being one of the roles that have been assigned to the agricultural sector, a huge amount of changes have occurred in both countries. Environmental obligations, animal welfare rules and regulations (Eurostat 2016). And integrated natural resource management have been incorporated in the respective countries' legal frames, with variations. The ways vary in which each country sector has reacted to those chances, given the circumstances.

For example, on many occasions, farmers added to their farms the function of tourism. This allowed them to diversify their practice and economics by adopting an agro-tourism model (McGehee 2007).

In Sweden, where four of the interviewees are from, the average family farm size is almost 38 hectares while in the country of Greece it is 7 hectares (Eurostat 2016b). The soil performance is also a factor that differs in the two countries with Sweden having better quality soil than Greece. In addition to that, in the country of Greece, more than 70 percent of the land is inadequate for farming due to poor soil or because it is covered by forests or low vegetation ( Nations Encyclopedia 2012). Taking into account those facts, one can easily say that even with the better weather conditions and the biggest growing season, Greek farmers have some disadvantages when contrasted with their Swedish counterparts. Smaller land holdings by more than five times, worse soil quality, a mountainous terrain, and many small islands that increases the costs that make the family farms not such a profitable business as their northern counterparts. Furthermore, the ongoing economic crisis in Greece places additional pressure on rural economics, in contrast to the thriving economy of Sweden.

Another notable fact are the three types of taxes that affect the decisions of existing farmers or newcomers to the practice of farming, to buy, own, or sell agricultural land: sales taxes, purchase taxes, and ownership taxes (Ciaian et al. 2010). The country of Greece has higher taxes, with this acting as an additional barrier to the sector.

Both countries are members of the European Union and thus, are subject to CAP, Common Agricultural Policy. CAP is one of the founding policies of the original Common Market, and it is a systematic way of the European Union to provide financial support to farmers.

In article 39 of the European Union Treaty, specific objectives of the CAP have been set. These aim to ensure: (1) that agricultural productivity will be increased by promoting technical progress, (2) fair living standards for farmers, (3) availability of supplies and (4) reasonable prices for consumers. And the fifth and last objective addresses the stabilization of markets (The Institute for Government, 2017).

Ever since its introduction in 1962, the CAP has undergone many changes, one of them being the most significant. The reduction of its ratio to the EU budget, from

73% in 1985 to 37% in 2017, and the inclusion of rural development in its goals (Parliamentary Budget Office 2018).

Another important aspect is the amount of trust that citizens have in their respected governments, which leads to specific behaviors. And trust in one's government is instrumental to introduce and apply reforms, structural or not, to the social and economic life of the land. In countries with high levels of trust, citizens will comply with rules and regulations and will not resist reforms. As it is stated in the OECD report, only 14.3% of the Greeks trust their government while in Sweden 51.3% of the citizens trust their government (OECD 2020). This, in addition to the high levels of corruption and clientelism (Piattoni, 2007) that the Greek society is plagued by, concludes and illustrates some of the most important aspects of the two countries on a social and financial level.

As the different context of the two countries and the legal frame and the levels of trust in the respected governments differs; it is easy to understand that those facts matter, as they allow or guide or even dictate values to be embraced and incorporated in their self and their reasoning and justification of their actions.

In the past century, the agricultural sector in Sweden underwent some dramatic changes as did the Greek sector. But the Swedish sector has gone from low productive subsistence farming, with the small family farm on the core, to highly productive market agriculture.

Within this complex and many times, complicated frame, both on a national and international level, one of the oldest practices exists. Always there for the same human needs and everchanging, the practice of farming.



## 6. METHOD

This part of the thesis is dedicated to the development and the explanation of the methodological choices which were made by me.

The main focus is on the practical part, the method used to the empirical material collection that is the cornerstone alongside with the theory of the entire thesis.

I will also expand and explain the research assumption that alongside the aim has been the guiding force for my research.

Lastly, the process of the data collection, the selection of the interviewees, and the presentation of them will conclude this part of the thesis.

An important note is that half of the interviews took place in Greece and some of the quotes were originally in Greek and have been translated to English by the author.

### 6.1. RESEARCH ASSUMPTION

This thesis aims to obtain a better understanding of the people that cultivate the land, i.e., farmers. This understanding is to be made on the social level and under the scope of the universal values that are present in all people, regardless of their profession, nationality, and local or national cultural background. To clarify I do not believe that all people hold the same value even in the same context and the same degree. This would have been next to impossible as different influences affect the adoption of a value. Those values act as a compass, at both conscious and unconscious levels, in the choices that we make, such as the manner of land use and cultivation (organic, conventional, or permaculture) and the effect that the consumers' choices have on this. Furthermore, as institutions and the government act on a subject in a specific manner, this has an effect too. For example, as the EU chooses to subsidize organic cultivation and promote the reduction of the use of insecticides and fertilizers, a change can be observed both in consumers and the farmers. This will allow me to understand better their actions of the farmers in their given agricultural space. I depart from the belief that our surrounding is a social construct and thus the farmers as actors operate within it accordingly. This thesis will explore the manner that they operate within their given surroundings, the farm, and expand from there within the limits of this original geographical space.

The understanding of reality is socially constructed, as we co-construct it with our fellow social members. A result of this, is that, the farmers' values are socially affected, and the value of their choice in a specific context influenced, values that are socially influenced in which, they as actors, are part of this influence both as the receivers of it and as a transmitters (Woodward et al. 2009).

I say this, meaning that both me, as the researcher and writer of this thesis, and the interviewed farmers are also influenced by this context, which also influences the results of the study. As we all are part of this shared meaning that we co-construct and the farmers nor I, are an exception to that, the interaction between us influences to an extend and alters this common understanding.

I do enter the field with knowledge both from previous work and affiliation with the sector. As I come from a rural family myself I cannot help myself from having preconceived ideas and perceptions. The theoretical framework, which is new to me, will be the guide for enhancing the understanding and analyzing of the empirical material, and the empirical material is used to clarify the theory. With the use of the hermeneutical approach, my research will be more understood through a combination of new empiric material and preconceived ideas and perceptions.

I argue that preconceived ideas and perceptions, as well as the knowledge that I have of the sector, do not act as an inhibitor but as the foundation that will help me go with the analysis a step further and utilize the theory at the maximum level.

## 6.2. THE RESEARCH METHOD

For the creation of the initial material, academic papers, documentation of previous research in the sector, and more, a qualitative research method has been used.

This material was the foundation for the construction of a semistructured set of open-ended questions. The resulting semistructured interviews can be compared with having a normal conversation with a meaning and a purpose (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

This gives me the advantage to capture the sometimes complex and elusive effects that institutions, states, policymakers, consumer demand, and large corporations have on the farmers, and to map out their inclination to one value over the other as the predominant in their reasoning of acting.

In addition to that, I as the field researcher have the flexibility to pick up new pieces of information and adapt my contact during the interviews by responding to any new information with an adapted question. This dialogue, where the synergy among the interviewee and the interviewer create the empirical material while the

interviewees use their own words, is an essential part and a tool for the completion of this thesis.

Lastly, this allows me to steer the conversation without steering the answers of the subject as this could be altering the data collection as it tampers with the answers and the material.

The interview guide allowed me to explore the same areas in each interview. It also permitted a degree of liberty to adapt to the acquisition of the information needed from the interviews (Valenzuela & Shrivastava 2005).

Sections were designed as part of the interview guide, with some soft demographic and informative questions on the **first** section, about the family members that constitute the workforce on the farm, educational levels, age, farm size, and the ownership status.

The **second** section included questions on environmental issues. Questions about concerns on climate change and the adaptability of their business generated the theme ‘stewards of nature or businesspeople and relationship with nature’ (see Section 7).

Questions in the **third** section attempted to discover connections between the mode of production, conventional, organic, or alternatives, and the other actors like consumers. From the answers, another theme emerged, ‘the relationship with nature’. The responses also further enhanced the ‘stewards of nature or businesspeople’ theme.

The last and **fourth** section of questions included some concerns regarding the coronavirus outbreak that was creating already problems for the agricultural sector. The intention was to acquire data that perhaps formulated patterns in their values, something that did not end up being the case. And as I entered the field with no knowledge or assumption about the data to be discovered the intention was to keep the themes steady and open for all interviews.

The reason for choosing interviews instead of approaching the sample through a questionnaire, is that qualitative interviews allow the participants to elaborate and motivate their choices in a way that explains in-depth those choices and actions, and also, me as the researcher to make additional questions to expand my understanding. Such an understanding can help me answer the above research questions effectively and also gain and offer knowledge on the situation.

## 6.3. THE RESEARCH PROCESS

### 6.3.1. SAMPLE AND DATA ANALYSIS

The large target population of potential interviewees compelled me to approach random people and use the snowball effect (Goodman 1961) allowing them to point out potential candidates and thus avoiding any bias or limitation to choice of practice, as part of the thesis intends to choose them, based on their capacity of farmers and not their specific practice.

Other than this rule for sampling, no other characteristics such as the type of products, gender, and size of the farm, have been taken into account in the selection process. The interviews were made with farmers in Sweden and Greece from February 2020 to July 2020. For the initial candidates' for the interviews in Sweden, a key role was held by an LRF representative and, a self-employed in the agricultural sector. LRF is a federation of farmers that is active in Sweden. They acted as gatekeepers standing between me, the data collector, and the potential interviewees (Lavrakas 2020). This was followed by a snowball approach (Goodman 1961). For the interviews in Greece locating interviewees was a lot easier and without the help of a gatekeeper. Having my origin in the rural areas of the country myself provided me with a plethora of candidates to pick up from. This plethora has been created by the snowball effect (Goodman 1961) as people have shown interest to be included. The selection was made based on the priority of the time of them expressing their interest.

Some interviews have been conducted through the use of electronic means, and some in-person. This inconsistency prevented me from using any observations that have been made in the in-person interviews.

After the interviews have concluded the transcription has been done, and in the case of the interviews in Greece a translation also. Out of those transcriptions, the necessary quotes could be separated to further support the analysis process.

### 6.3.2. SAMPLE AND DATA GENERATION

Some reoccurring themes in almost all interviews expressed explicitly or implicitly, guided me to analyze them. Furthermore, some of the values in some interviews, like tradition, surprised me to a huge degree and revealed to me an opportunity to explore if that is the case in all, and if not, how is the progress or not, of a farmer guided by their values. In addition to that, some of the sectors' problems, like environmental problems, arise from the idea that we had of nature and the resilience of it. Thus, I decided to concentrate on those themes/topics.

First, is the idea of the good farmer, how they conceptualize the good farmer, and how those features are attributed with a value as a prime explanation?

Second, how they view themselves as stewards of nature or as businesspeople when they apply their practice of farming. What are their priorities when they make decisions?

Third, what are the values that motivate or inhibit the progress of the individual as a farmer? Are there any values that allowed them to further their practice of them being farmers or act as inhibition factors? As some values act as the conditions that allow them to move forward, some root them in a vicious cycle that is hard to break. By progress, I mean both in the economical part of their business and on them acquiring knowledge that could be different from what they already have or furthering their production on further processing it or lastly in diversifying it in the premise of multifunctionality.

Lastly, the relationship with nature is a very important factor as it reveals not only how they comprehend nature, but also themselves in nature.

I know that Schwartz Value Theory has usually, if not exclusively to this point, been used to map out values that the participants report for themselves. However, I decided to follow a different path of data collection and analysis, in an attempt to give a mapping of the situation outside their explicit reporting.

In addition to that, as the theory also touches a psychological part of ourselves, I wish to argue that it is part of our being to have a conscious and unconscious side. As we act and react daily to the stimulus, we assign our actions and reactions, or better we interpreted our motives in a specific manner. Our initial interpretation is not always accurate, as some times we fail to assess ourselves and our motives. What we think as an environmentally-friendly behavior can sometimes be attributed to conformity, with the given social context that we function, thus moving away from the initial value. As an example outside the agricultural sector, imagine having a cyclist stating that he is commuting to his workplace only with the bicycle, and in a self-reported value approach he prioritizes the environmental reasons thus Universalism, but through a qualitative interview approach a different reason surfaces, health or good body shape, or something else. The prime value that motivates this cyclist's choices is different from what he initially stated. With this approach, different data can be generated and extracted from an interview instead of a self-reported value approach.

Thus, I conclude my argument that to explore this possibility of the theory I decided to opt for the qualitative interviews instead of questionnaires, as an alternative but valid manner for data generation.

### 6.3.3. ETHICAL ASPECTS

During qualitative research and interviews that tend to be unstructured, some amount of sensitive pieces of information are possible to be obtained. The ethical aspect of the research was not to neglected. So, it is of the utmost importance to have the consent and knowledge of the participants of recording and further processing the material (Miller 2012).

Explanations and any sort of information were available at their disposal before the actual interview or the recording of them. Like what is the theme of the thesis, and what I wish to do with the interview material, and even some concerns about their anonymity. Lastly, questions were made about me and answered, like if I have ever farmed or owned land and upon them learning that I do more questions arisen in more casual subjects. In one case, the interview set of questions were made available to them, the farmer and his wife, since they raised an existing linguistic barrier from him on not being able to use the English language efficiently. This was resolved also with the intervention of his wife acting as an interpreter for the interview. Lastly, during the interviews, with an exception of the first, when something came up as a piece of information, clarifying questions where made to ensure that my understanding was similar to theirs.

### 6.3.4. LIMITATIONS

I must admit that my research has limitations. The linguistic part, the budget limitations, and the timing affected it. I do not speak Swedish and that excluded me from approaching someone that does not speak English, and the thought of hiring someone to act as an interpreter was out of the question due to budget limitations. The budget limitations also excluded me from approaching farmers in Sweden outside a narrow geographical area. But the wide range of interviewees in practice and age groups counterbalanced the above limitations. Time limitations are linked with the fact that, as time progresses, the growing season was about to start and the seasonal workload spiked for the farmers, making it harder to find time for even an interview. But even with this limitation for research for the level of this thesis, the effort made for the selection of the interviewees, the material, and other data collected, allow the results a high level of validity.

### 6.3.5. PRESENTING THE INTERVIEWEES

Out of the many attempts and efforts which were made to find suitable and willing participants for interviews, eight farmers, fitted the definition in the introduction of the farmer as the one that in a plot of land has the primary objective of the production of food (Section 1). Four interviews in Sweden and four in Greece.

Table 1 includes some basic information and demographics of them. Coding for them was used instead of names, S.F.1. (1st Swedish farmer) [and similar coding for the rest of them henceforth], and in addition to this coding similarly (F) stands for female and (M) for male where ever this is mentioned.

And at this point, I wish to explain that even though in some cases like S.F.2., S.F.3., S.F.4. and, G.F.3., in table 1 they appear to be more than one, this does not mean that the data collection and analysis were generated from more than one individual at the time. For example, in the case of S.F.2. the spouse assisted in the translation during the interview. Data in the table 1 that include spouses are there to clarify the family's, if any, income. And in the case of S.F.3., the primary interviewee was one of them that asked some clarification questions, her peers, regarding demographics, and was offering answers based on the idea behind the creation of their farm.

### **Sweden**

All the Swedish interviewees are located in the geographical space of central Sweden, mellansverige, and to be more precise, from the county of Uppsala.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Swedish interviewee **S.F.1.** is a well-educated male of the age of 25 that is implementing permaculture cultivation, while maintaining beehives in it, on his family land for food production, although this is not the main income for him or his family. The farm has been inherited from their ancestor who used it as their sole source of income. The knowledge of farming stopped being transferred as the farm stopped being the sole source of income for the generation before him. At the moment there is an unclear status of ownership for the future.

**S.F.2.** is a couple that has been working with the land for many years, their age is 49(F), and 53(M). Their educational level is high and related to farming and their children also received higher education. Organic cultivation has been established on their farm since 2000. The male farmer has a family background in agriculture. The farming of the land alongside the equestrian club that they maintain on their land is the family's main income. The entire family is involved with the farm to the degree that is allowed to their offsprings. They also employ 3 farmhands all year long to handle the enormous 390 hectares of land.

**S.F.3.** are a group of women that reside in one of the small towns in the vicinity of Uppsala. They have just started with the cultivation of their small rented land, with the intention of expanding in the future. Their age group is from 30 to 55, and they are all well-educated with two of them having some relevant education and experience. The type of cultivation is organic. For none of them, this is not the main income and there is no such intention.

**S.F.4.** is a couple that recently bought a house in the Swedish countryside, with the land being approximately 5 hectares. They are in the process of establishing the design of the land and they intend to do so in permaculture regenerative agriculture. Their age is 35(F) and 38(M) and their educational level is high and relevant to the

agricultural sector. There is a family background in agriculture and, land cultivation is not the family's main income.

**Greece.**

The Greek interviewees are more spread geographically with the most distance to each other being more than 1300 kilometres.

**G.F.1.** is a 38-year-old female with 4 hectares of land and some animals. The type of cultivation is conventional and even though this is not her own family's income, she is working the land on behalf of her mother as this is her only income. She has a high education irrelevant to the practice. There is a family background in agriculture with no experience, though.

**G.F.2.** is a 32-year-old farmer. He and his family have 10 hectares of land and 500 goats and, in addition to that, there is some production of cheese. Land cultivation is organic and conventional and it is the family's only income. His education, as well as that of the rest family members, is elementary, with him having finished a cheesemaking school. There is a family background in agriculture and experience, handed down to him.

**G.F.3.** is a group of male farmers, band together, and pulling their resources to create an agricultural business that further processes their agricultural production. Their respected ages are 31-33-35. They are cultivating 4,4 hectares of land organically while maintaining beehives on it. In addition to that, they process their products and sell soft drinks. Their educational level is high with only one of them having relevant to farming and intergenerational knowledge. This is their families' only income and the family members do not all work on the land, only the husbands do.

**G.F.4.** is a 55-year-old male farmer that cultivates conventionally 12 hectares of land. He is highly educated as is all of his family, but only his son has relevant education. They all work together including the children as far as their university obligations permit it. There is a family background in agriculture and experience.



**Table 1**

	Gender	Age	Education	Relevant education	Family background in agriculture	The main source of income or not	Amount of land and/or number of animals	Type of cultivation	Products
<b>Sweden</b>									
<b>S.F.1.</b>	male	25	Master studies	no	no	no	3 hectares and bee hives	permaculture	Fruits, vegetables and, honey
<b>S.F.2.</b>	female male	49- 53	University degree	yes	yes	yes	300 hectares arable land and 90 hectares forest and equestrian club	organic	animal feed, Rapeseed and, beans
<b>S.F.3.</b>	8 female	30 to 55	University degree	2 cases	2 cases	no	1 hectare	organic	berries and vegetables
<b>S.F.4.</b>	female male	35- 38	University degree	yes	yes	no	5 hectares	permaculture regenerative agriculture	currently being designed and established
<b>Greece</b>									
<b>G.F.1.</b>	female	38	University degree	no	no	no	4 hectares 50 bunnies 50 chickens and 50 peacocks	conventional	Olive, orange, and, avocado trees
<b>G.F.2.</b>	male	32	Elementary education and 2 years of cheese making course	yes	yes	yes	10 hectares 500 goats	Organic and conventional	animal fed, goat meat and cheese
<b>G.F.3.</b>	3 males	31- 33- 35	University degree	one case	one case	yes	4.4 hectares bee hives	organic	aromatic and medicinal herbs, soft soda drinks
<b>G.F.4.</b>	male	55	University degree	no	yes	yes	12 hectares	conventional	blueberries, pears cherries, and apple trees

*Table 1: Presenting the interviewees Source: own compilation*

## 7. RESULTS

This data collection that led to the concepts, fits also to answer the research questions. The concept of the good farmer (Section 7.1) illustrates how farmers view themselves. This is illustrated with a direct link to their values and answers the question how their values are connected to their normative ideas related to farming, specifically, ideas related to what ‘good farming’ means.

Next, the concept of stewards of nature or businesspeople (Section 7.2) reflects how their values shape their practices and how this is embedded in their reasoning. The section also reports on the values that farmers express when talking about farming. As the concepts unfold, many answers to the questions touch on more than one concept. Something that is happening to the last question “how do these values relate to their ideas about the environmental aspects and impacts of farming?” which is entangled with two concepts ‘relationship with nature’ and stewards of nature or businesspeople’. The necessary quotes alongside the interpretation of their values will offer the link to the theory presented in the theory section above and will help me explain them.

### 7.1. THE GOOD FARMER

The idea that my interviewees hold over how farmers are supposed to be is a strong one, and it is structured similarly as in all professions and occupations. The priorities that farmers have to this idea accompanied by their values is something that enriched by the data, presents, and explains their point of view. What constitutes a farmer as good is something that does not leave farmers indifferent, as part of their practice they prioritize their workload and practice according to these ideas.

Some of the farmers said that their view of the good farmer is affected by the environmental concerns such as “we try to farm in harmony with nature, we do it organically, no pesticides, no fungicides not like the other farmers” (S.F.1.). He defines the good farmer as someone that cares about the land and places the environment as an indistinguishable part of it. Others followed and shared similar ideas but his opinion stood out the most.

Environmental concerns are part of a heated debate within both the Swedish and Greek societies. But what struck me as interesting is the approach of the G.F.1. whose wording on her trees was almost identical with speaking about a human. It was almost as if she anthropomorphized them, taking it a step further than the rest “*There is a time for forming the tree with cutting the branches, water it and feed it the proper nourishment,*” (G.F.1.). On the same subject, the need that some expressed about timing is natural as missing key dates of planting and growing is amongst the core functions when working with the land. After all, some depend on the land to make a living so their idea of the good farmer differentiates as they emphasize on aspects of management “to do things in a good way, to produce something off the land, not wasting - and timing, timing is very important” (S.F.2.). But without neglecting and taking into consideration some environmental concerns “also, the soil in a good condition for the future, don't destroy the soil. The next generation must continue” (S.F.2.).

The linking of the concept of good farming with security and the continuity of the farm is very common - as stated previously, the predominant model of the farm in the EU is family farms as S.F.2. takes into account in his quote. And the intergenerational change is to this day that most farmers end the practice. Lastly the need for learning and being innovative supplements the interviewees' description of the good farmer “*First and foremost, is the love of your practice and if you do, you will take action in learning about it with restlessness*” (G.F.4.). Perhaps here we can see some of the agricultural extension that over time becomes part of the formal education and to this day is implemented not only on a national level but also in the EU.

It seems that the concept of the good farmer has a wording that manifests it in very different values. Amongst farmers, and even though in some cases the need to survive does not surpass people's need to protect the environment, their values motivate them to keep going and exploring new ways for their practice while in some cases the good farmer is defined with the family security in its core. Value assignment per farmer in page 43, table 2.

## 7.2. VALUES THAT INHIBIT OR MOTIVATE THE PROGRESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS A FARMER

The idea of analysing the farmer's values related to one's progress as a farmer was a product of the interview process. During G.F.1.'s interview she stated that she and her sister as women were automatically excluded from the sector. They have

never been invited, encouraged, or been the subject of any work in the fields as they are women and their father considers it unfit for that *“I didn't even know where are the tap was to water the plants”* (G.F.1.). This norm was part of the rural areas in the past, but coming across it in the present made me wonder about values that might act as motivation or inhibiting factors for one to prosper or not in the sector. But also the same norm is what encourages her to keep going *“For sentimental reasons and, for my mother, since this is her only income, and for my father, since this was his lifework, and I do not wish to see the land wither”* (G.F.1.). The same value on different people and at a different time acts both as motivation and inhabitation factor. And what acted as a barrier is also the cornerstone of her conviction to keep going. As it is important to further examine such a subject since it seems that her father's values on the subject affected her and examining her values on the subject can show how to move forward in a similar case for policymakers or even better to prevent such cases of discrimination.

By returning to the interviews that I had already done and adjusting to the upcoming ones the concept was constructed and examined. This has allowed me to observe the different definitions of progress, as some prefer to move forward to the social aspect and enhance that part instead of the economy. Like *“It gives me a deeper connection to my ancestors' lands. My grandpa was my bigger idol, and to keep this place beautiful and develop it in a way that I know he would be proud of, is his great satisfaction for me. Economically speaking, am I driven by economics? I'm more driven by environmental aspects and about, about preserving the legacy of my grandparents”* (S.F.1.) where environmental concerns are being prioritized. But the social aspect is visible in *“The worst thing that can happen when you garden is that everything fails. You lose your interest if you feel this is too hard and you give up. So we have gone with things that we know will make it here”* (S.F.3.). They prioritize the preservation and enhancement of their relationships over productivity. And this since as they are a group the idea to move forward is as a group. The bond that they will forge now is more important than productivity.

In summary, it seems that the values even the same ones can act both as motivational goals and inhibiting factors and that the same values for one person are inhibiting factor while for someone else nothing else than a barrier to be surpassed.

Having one value over the other in this context of values as inhibiting or motivational factors is not necessarily a bad or good thing. The different frame is the one that dictates this need. By uncovering the value(s) in this it means that we gain valuable knowledge. That it can neither be reproduced to help the farmers to move forward in the frame of a national policy for example or to implement policies to change existing values like in the case of gender discrimination I found with G.F.1. . The players I mention in the earlier parts of this paper like the market and the consumers seem to affect the values adopted in some cases. As the markets

dictate increased productivity and success to be measured in wealth, 2.S.F. suggests *“We should be a businessman to take care of the thing we produce to sell it to the one that pays the best”* (S.F.2.). Farmers that have farming as the main source of income seem to align with that.

Value assignment per farmer in page 43, table 2.

### 7.3. RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

This concept of the relationship with nature provides insight into the reasoning of the interviewees. As the farmers' view on the subject is important for mapping not only their current view but also outlines their intentions for the future as well. This relationship can take many forms and in a variety of themes as the people of the sector face a variety of challenges and choose different ways to approach them. This difference can be seen in their values. Overall the interviewees seem that they have clustered in two different groups, under which the values of the individuals fall. Those two groups are the Self-transcendence that includes all the Swedish interviewees and Self-enhancement that includes all the Greek interviewees. This interesting finding that places them on opposites sides, in relation to the scheme on page 20.

The more environmentally friendly approach that the interviewees from Sweden have can be attributed firstly in the surpass of economic problems in the past as they appear to be more organized in that sector (backpack policy, an extensive effort to organize and make economics on the farming business tidy, so that the business backpack won't carry extra an unnecessary weight) as described by Höckert & Ljung (2013). And secondly the general more environmentally friendly stance of both the country and the society of Sweden. The reasoning of the Swedish farmers goes beyond the economics and takes into consideration people's livelihoods without neglecting the future *“If we could change some of our practices and still stay profitable then you know what will that mean to to to the world and to climate change how can you know if then we can change some habits of people as well it's it's a huge it's a huge shift of mindsets in lots of ways for lots of people”* (S.F.4.) but always placing the environment first *“I increased biodiversity on that piece of land, and I lock carbon in the soil zero carbon emissions, the food produced there is carbon positive”* (S.F.1.).

This is in contrast with their Greek counterparts that are coming from a more fragmented society where a sense of achievement and pleasure is to be drawn from their individual work, their approach is more egocentric *“we are nature, what is nature without us?”* (G.F.1.). And even though their values differ I will conclude that their approach is not better than their Swedish counterparts. They do not separate nature from themselves but that can be attributed to linguistically and cultural aspects in contrast with the Swedes that illustrate an environmentally

friendly approach with a social aspect that goes beyond their individuality and take into account the arguments that being raised by science in regards to the future. Value assignment per farmer in page 43, table 2.

## 7.4. STEWARDS OF NATURE OR BUSINESSPEOPLE?

The concept of examining the farmers' values related to their views of themselves as stewards of nature or businesspeople has been created by the previous concept as they are entangled. Consequently, a similar view can be seen in those two concepts in the same people. The same cultural division can be observed again in this part of the analysis. The interviewees are not only clustered by nationality but the most notable is the preference of almost all of the national group of Greeks under only one value. This common denominator of the Greek interviewees that follow is their demonstration of self-interest being in their core reasoning thus making their expressed values fall under Self-enhancement, as it is its motivational goal.

This big division in the second environmental concept on how they view themselves is interesting. Even in the choice of cultivation, when made as organic it is driven by economics, and during the interviews on these subjects, almost no environmental concerns were mentioned by the Greek farmers. The sole focus was on economics and maximizing profitability *“One avocado tree produces the same amount of pieces of fruits but in contrast to oranges, they are heavier and fetch a better price. I make almost ten times more than the oranges”* (G.F.1.). The prioritization of the economy over the environment and the lack of her to even mention the environment when the subject came up leaves no doubt that her view is a businesswoman and again *“organic is what is sells in herbs conventional prices are too low”* (G.F.3.). In contrast to their counterparts from Sweden.

The clustering of the interviewees is with a distinction on the basis of their nationality. I believe that it is not only the more environmentally friendly Sweden that formulates this but also the vastly different frame that exists in the two countries. The socio-economic net that is in place in the country of Sweden alongside the robust economy in contrast to the country of Greece in both aspects amongst more differences, leaves room for people to think differently *“But like I said earlier, the entire agriculture industry must turn a switch in its mindset. It must stop focusing primarily on economics, it must help that we must put a lot of money into helping farmers, it must start looking at it as stuff like stewards of the land like people who, nurture their land and not as, as the destroyers of it.”* as is illustrated

by S.F.1. Furthermore, we must not neglect to take into account that when someone depends on his or her livelihood thinks acts and responds differently “*yeah, we have to be business*” (S.F.2.). in relation to the same subject and even more different when we include the above reasons.

Value assignment per farmer in page 43, table 2.

For S.F.1. that is an environmentalist, as he self-declares himself, the priority of nature has been steady in his core reasoning and there is no surprise that again he prioritizes nature “*We try to farm in harmony with nature, we do it organically, no pesticides, no fungicides*” (S.F.1.). When the idea comes to the interview and he further elaborates on it, he explains that diversification of the practice is preferable from increased productivity. “*We're not making it into a business but should that be the desire, we would have to increase the amount of land we used to farm. And we would have to be creative because the size of the land is not too big. So, the actual farming would not sustain us economically on its own. It would have to be complemented by things like, maybe a conference center or education about permaculture*” (S.F.1.). It seems that even in the choice not to increase the pressure on the land in favor of economics, he wishes to alleviate it through the spread of knowledge to others.

His reasoning goes so far as to state “*But we also don't want to grow it too much because we don't want to compete with the wild bees. It has to be a balance between the honey we take and the place that we provide for the wild bees there*”, and also demonstrating that even a small living organism is equal. “*But like I said earlier, the entire agriculture industry must turn a switch in its mindset. It must stop focusing primarily on economics, it must help that we must put a lot of money into helping farmers, it must start looking at it as stuff like stewards of the land like people who, nurture their land and not as, as the destroyers of it. Not as destroy not that they destroyed, but they should*” (S.F.1.).

It is quite clear that he views himself as a steward of nature and thoughts of economic issues go first through thoughts of environmental concerns. The assigned value in his reasoning is Universalism, as he strives for the welfare of all people and nature's protection, taking into account even the stake of the smallest in size inhabitant of the environment a bee.

In a similar way of thinking S.F.3. having as S.F.1. a small in size farm to work with and with a plethora of people working there also act taking into account environmental and social concerns higher than economic. This is reflected in “*So there's that whole feeling of sharing and giving and teaching each other skills that have fallen by the wayside*” (S.F.3.). Furthermore given the quite formal structure of their organization and, their future aim to not only work with the land but diversifying their practice through acting as an educational institute, that will allow them in the future to apply for grants for acting as such. And given that their practice is already environmentally-friendly their view on the concept as clearly as stewards

of nature, they do care about economics but they are not taken into account above nature or society. I assign this into Benevolence as their value, they intend to further strengthen their existing social bonds with this process and build new ones with the community and self-assumed responsibility.

S.F.2. is a businessman, the sheer size of the land, 300 hectares of arable land and 90 hectares forest and an equestrian club, and the fact that despite his family's occasional contribution, he hires all year-long three farmhands, leaves little room for guessing as he says "*yeah, we have to be business*" (S.F.2.). And he further builds his argument with him saying "*Yeah, you shouldn't be a producer. We should be a businessman to take care of the thing you produce to sell it to the one that pays the best*" (S.F.2.). Such a farm cannot be ruled by something less than like a business and even though environmental concerns are taken into account the priority is economics. The deciphered value is Self-direction is the value in the core of this reasoning. He contrasts his independent thought with the one that the previous generation had, and that allowed him to develop a different mindset. One that allows him to flourish and build a healthy business, which is supplemented by the equestrian club. His economic growth but more importantly independence, economically speaking, from the ones that he follows is in direct link with that value.

The last Swedish interviewee, S.F.4., also intends to follow a clear business model but in contrast to S.F.2. is viewing herself as a steward of nature. This can be seen in the intention is to follow the regenerative agriculture land-use model, for their land. All choices are being reasoned under the economy, but natural balance that is reflected in the land-use model and the choices of plants "*I am looking at the traditional Swedish varieties which have grown instead of cultivars*" (S.F.4.) demonstrate the steward view of herself over businesswoman. Self-Direction is what fuels her Independent thought and, sets her own goals and creates her design for the land independently, and moves forward relaying in her creativity.

One common denominator of the Greek interviewees that follow is their demonstration of self-interest being in their core reasoning thus making their expressed values fall under Self-enhancement, as it is its motivational goal.

G.F.1. intends to convert her practice to organic, and explains that this is motivated by economic reasons as organic products fetch better prices. The choice of cultivation of avocados is explained by her as such "*One avocado tree produces the same amount of pieces of fruits but in contrast to oranges, they are heavier and fetch a better price. I make almost ten times more than the oranges*" (G.F.1.). The prioritization of the economy over the environment and the lack of her to even mention the environment when the subject came up leaves no doubt that her view is a businesswoman. As she tries to maximize profitability whit her intention to



apply control over the land as a natural resource and the wealth that comes from it, the assigned value is power.

G.F.3. has a farming practice that is also economically driven. And this is what dictated the selection of cultivation and the type, as he reasons that “*organic is what is sells in herbs conventional prices are too low*” (G.F.3.). The business is also supplemented with apiculture which also maximizes blossom and plant growth, the idea for this to also produce honey with a special flavor. And the further diversification in the processing of their productions, a soft drink/ soda, flavored with their herbs, is also made as a choice to maximize profit. They also keep aiming for more by further diversifying their profit by adding new products. As it is clearly stated, even the choices made on the type of cultivation were made based on profitability, thus I interpreted, that they are clearly on the side of the business. The above forces me to recognize Power as the prime value. Power and wealth are the end goal and this is achieved by controlling all available resources.

The following farmer is also clearly on the side of the businessman, “*Even farmers are to become businessmen; if not, they are doomed*” (G.F.4). To further enhance his argument he refers to the recent change in the legal frame that forces farmers to keep logistics books “*The ones that resisted the bookkeeping are the oldest generation, and they are finished both biologically and by practice*” (G.F.4). The above and the fact that he enhanced his practice by including on-field refrigeration and has to his disposal the latest models in machinery and the fact that he, as he said, travels to other countries to learn more about his practice leaves no room for misinterpretation. Power is at the core of his conviction. Both for the control over the natural resource on his possession, which he is treating wisely for generating wealth.

The last farmer G.F.2. differs slightly from his Greek counterparts as he has achievement as value. But as the rest of them, he views is that farmers should be businesspeople. He differentiates from other farmers in his area of activity by saying “*Most of them in the village only care to plant something that gives a substitute and they prefer to spend their time hunting*” (G.F.2.) and with this exercise a critique to them as he considers them as non- businesspeople nor as stewards of nature. With this critique aims to self-contrast himself to others and him arguing about the fact that one must always evolve and keep changing to move forward and upward. In addition to that, he describes that the pressure from the food chain to keep the price low forces him to raise the value of their work by taking control of the sale of the final product, the cheese. Initially, it seems that power is what could be assigned through him trying to take control of the natural resources to generate wealth. But I decipher that Achievement fits better as a value for him. The fact that he self-contrast himself with others to demonstrate his capability and success while satisfying his ambition to become more than the ones that he follows allows me to safely conclude to Achievement. He is aiming for a business model with no mention of environmental concerns.

## 8. SYNTHESIS

According to my understanding and my research, there are some big divisions when it comes to the interviewees.

The first and more obvious is their nationality. This creates a frame in which they have to operate and make decisions. This frame is also influential in the formulation of their prime values on the concepts under examination above. This becomes transparent in table 2, where the national group of Greek farmers has clustered in the concept of stewards of nature or businesspeople almost exclusively under Power as their prime value. While the Swedish group seems to be more concerned with the environmental aspect of their practice.

Overall, it is also worth mentioning the clustering of the farmers by nationality on environmentally-friendly values, like Universalism and Benevolence. The second division is the fact of their dependence on farming as a prime source of income or not. This seems to motivate them to adopt a different orientation in values from the rest. This is understandable as they must make different choices from the rest of the farmers as their livelihoods are dependent on that. Furthermore, this is obvious in table 2, where 3 out of four non-economically dependent farmers have as values from the segment of self-transcended and openness, to change and one is on the segment of self-enhancement. On the other hand, the economically dependent farmers, three out of four, consider Power as their prime value, while the others have self-direction. And I believe that the need to have power over nature and increase the chances of survival is an important factor.

Their choice of the type of cultivation is also another division. As it seems, the ones that cultivate the land in an environmentally-friendly manner, tend to cluster in the segment of self-transcended, as illustrated in table 2. The exception of the Greek Farmer 3, further verifies the above argument on the national division and the effect that this has on the formulation and adoption of a value.

An overarching argument drawing data from table 2, is that the more one's livelihood is dependent on something, in this case, farming, the more it seems to adopt a value in an analogy that will protect it and justify the orientation of economics. The national frame seems to have a big effect on that, as the interviewees seem to have different inclinations on values and tend to behave similarly. This can be attributed to the different social context and ideas/perception of nature and how we should treat it, and the legal frames for environmental

protection that apply in the different levels, as Sweden is one of the most, if not the most, environmentally- friendly country in the EU when it comes to the legal frame

<b>Table 2</b>				
	<b>THE GOOD FARMER</b>	<b>VALUES THAT INHIBIT OR MOTIVATE THE PROGRESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS A FARMER</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE</b>	<b>STEWARDS OF NATURE OR BUSINESSPEOPLE?</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>value</b>	<b>value</b>	<b>value</b>
<b>S.F.1.</b>	Universalism	Conformity	Universalism	Universalism
<b>S.F.2.</b>	Security	Power	Benevolence	Self-direction
<b>S.F.3.</b>	N/A	Benevolence	Benevolence	Benevolence
<b>S.F.4.</b>	Benevolence	Hedonism	Universalism	Self-Direction
<b>Greece</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>value</b>	<b>value</b>	<b>value</b>
<b>G.F.1.</b>	Universalism	Tradition	Achievement	Power
<b>G.F.2.</b>	Security	Self-Direction	Hedonism	Achievement
<b>G.F.3.</b>	Self-Direction	Conformity	Hedonism	Power
<b>G.F.4.</b>	Self-Direction	Power	Power	Power

Table 2 Overall farmers values Source: own compilation

## 9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Returning to the initial definition of farmers, anyone that can cultivate the land and produce food, can be called as such. One can see that the set of values and the prioritization of them are not that different when it comes to contrasting them across countries or examine them under their distinct differences in the type of cultivation or size of the land. I do have to acknowledge that small-scale research like this one can produce results limited by the amount of the interviewees. However, using the theory of basic human values as a set of tools to examine the data from the field has proven enlightening about the way people prioritize their values, about how they assign this prioritization and how they act and react in the given frame.

Given the extended importance of the sector, in providing food for all of us, and the many problems that it faces, social, economic and environmental, perhaps this is one way to examine, redefine and solve some of them. Furthermore, I believe that the qualitative approach that I have chosen to work with this theory offered me an advantage as it gave me the opportunity to have a glance at how they define and explain the reasoning on assigning their decisions, on acting and reacting in this frame.

It seems that farmers' understanding of themselves and their practice is affected primarily by the fact of whether this is their prime source of income or not. People that depend on their income from farming, incline to define farming as less on the side of self-transcendence. Security and Self-Direction dominates the farmers' values. The country of origin and the choice of practice are also decisive factors in the adoption of a value in given situations. The features that defines them as good farmers seem to be affected by all of the above.

The orientation of their set of values seems to be the guiding line for their choices made both in the past and future. They follow them diligently and co-create a frame for them to act and react with their peers and actors of the sector. After all, it can be deduced that those values are part of their cognitive status, and as such, an inseparable part of theirs but susceptible to change due to both external and internal factors. As stated above and in accordance to the theory one can very well have one value in a context while embracing another in a different context (Schwartz 1992). The driving forces in the formulation of those values are, as said above, actors of the sectors. The vast differences between the two countries in their frames as

described above (Section 7 and 8) play also a huge role in that. Not only the morphological differences in the landscape but also societal problems that Greece has not solved for years. Like the clientelism (Piattoni, 2007) that to a large extent forces people to act very differently. This trust that is embedded in people's collective and cognitive selves acts as an uncharted factor with silenced agency. In contrast to Sweden, that to this days is seen as one of the most if not the most environmentally friendly countries. That keeps through actors like LRF promoting the environment and animal welfare (for example, "*Sverige använder minst antibiotika i EU*" LRF 2020).

Unfortunately for this paper and the research that generated it, it is not possible to go beyond this statement. Sinking deeper in the individual and the society that it exists and acts in, is mandatory but impossible at the moment, this requires more time. Furthermore, more extensive and repeatable interviews are needed to examine the individual in terms of psychology other than a social science approach. And perhaps adding the theory's survey model (Schwartz 1992) in the initial stages to later enrich with interviews to observe differentiations in between them, while going deeper in the analysis approach

By understanding the people of the sector, farmers, and the way that they having been molded or the forces that influenced them and their values, we can very well innovatively approach the problems.

While doing this thesis I could not help my self-wondering on how the CAP programs could be redefined and have a different approach that could touch subjects like gender issues and productivity in my country. And perhaps even close the gap between the two societies in terms of we view the environment and other members of their society. Something that Liñán and Fernandez-Serrano (2013) verify with their research as, according to them, cultural attributes might be the reason for 60% of the difference in the European Union countries' Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Amongst the issues that make me think, one of them struck me as the most important. The gendered discrimination that I came across, that to this day is the norm in the rural, and in some extension not only just in the rural. A plethora of CAP and outside of CAP programs under the auspices of the EU have been implemented back home but as it seems the necessary change takes place slowly as old customs tend to die hard. A brief critique of the subject is that women entrepreneurship should not be limited to the traditional ways in which women are already working. Like small organizations of women that keep processing food. If to this day people of my generation are being discriminated against on this basis we are in danger to fall behind and miss an important opportunity to evolve beyond those past social norms. As we are supporting to be all equals by excluding women from land ownership we deprive ourselves of having farmers that have equal potential as a man.

I wish to close this thesis with the following, returning to the initial definition of the farmer. I full-hearted believe that all of us, given the opportunity, can become

a Farmer. The urban environment of many of the EU cities and the surrounding rural land can become, under certain conditions, a great opportunity for citizens to become farmers, not necessarily for the production of food. Since the production would be at a small scale, this could offer some pressure relief for the environment and create a value of appreciation for the products of the land. The values that we adopt in any given situation make a difference. I will have to claim that, even though we may all set off with a specific set of values, through interaction one with the other and given the opportunity, we can all make a difference for a more environmentally-friendly food production with more of us as farmers.

The last addition to that, is the recent work that has been done and published, unfortunately not before the data collection and analysis of this paper. In this, the authors link Schwartz Value theory with the creation of a dictionary that can link language with values (Ponizovskiy et al. 2020). This offers an opportunity to further expand the application of the theory in different fields that insofar were ignored, like social media, and post on forums. The authors express that there is applicability in more contexts like parliaments' and political campaigns and more something that remains to be seen.

This new addition to the field of values does make a researcher wonder. Perhaps the inclusion of additional data from alternative sources can further explain and verify the values that people embrace or choose in a given context. This can be done by including government policy documents, conversations in the public sphere that can be analyzed regardless of their volume. And as the public arena expands and includes in a big degree, forums, social media, and the communication that takes place there is harder to keep track of. This new work can help us further decode and understand the influence that this communication has and what people think and perhaps why.

## 10. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF THE CORONAVIRUS CHANGES AND AFFECT ON THE THESIS

Even though measures have been taken during the preparatory part of the Thesis, none could have been prepared for a global scale pandemic. The complete lockdown of entire countries and measures or suggestions from central governments for their citizens to follow and obey, have created a frame that made the completion of the thesis problematic. My inability to speak the Swedish language was a barrier to be expected, but people being negative to an interview was not. This led to radical changes in the thesis subject and equally important to its design, as well.

The initial idea was to explore the question of who is going to be the future farmer. And although the thesis revolved around the same question, I cannot help myself asking what kind of results I would have, if the fieldwork remained undisturbed. The idea was to have interviews with people that have the occupation of the farmer with a focus on the intergenerational change, and how this affects the practice of farming both in the aspects of how conventional or alternatives like organic they could be and in the diversification of the practice that allows the business to build resilience and sustainability (Knickel *et al.* 2018). In addition to those interviews, the idea was to include interviews or a group interview with students of the Agricultural High School here, in Uppsala County. As it is understood, this was shot down as an idea, as the presence of an outsider at a school could potentially compromise the student's safety in the pandemic context. So the ideas of the younger generation of farmers that is to come, were not included in the thesis.

A big compromise was made from my part on the interviews, as well. As I was trying to reach out for willing individuals while Spring was coming, it became increasingly hard to find willing and available participants. This led to being the recipient of many declines. So, the initial design to have semistructured interviews with a phenomenological approach (Creswell & Creswell 2018) in an attempt to experience the farmers' lifeworld was abandoned. This was replaced by actual face to face interviews, skype and messenger interviews, and giving the interview questions in advance and getting the answers in a written form. The lack of physical proximity deprived me of the opportunity to make further observations and to lose a portion of data from the fieldwork. Facial

expressions, vocal fluctuations, and visual observations that would permit one to formulate the farmers' lifeworld, were not collected.

In addition to that, the gathering of data through sending questions and getting answers through/via an email, prevented me from asking clarifying questions on a specific subject or asking additional questions about an interesting issue. Last but not least, observations (Kings & Ilbery 2015) that would have further enhanced the lifeworld perception, couldn't be made in the given frame of the interviews, which, as mentioned earlier, were not face to face, not that I did not attempt to it.

The situation of Coronavirus did not only bring about difficulties. It is more than certain, that many papers will be published not limited to the agricultural sector and only by the Social science discipline. The unprecedented situation generated a separate section on the set of questions for my interviews. At the beginning of the crisis, none could foresee that the situation would last that long nor that the effects of it would have been spilled over to the agricultural sector. The closing of borders of entire countries, like mine, Greece, and placing entire populations in quarantine created unseen problems. The two problems that I focused on my Thesis, out of the many that might occur and documented by others in the future, are the immobilization of goods (European Parliament, Covid-19: emergency measures to help EU farmers and fishermen, 2020) and of the seasonal working force, critical as the EU calls them, (*Coronavirus: Commission presents practical guidance to ensure the free movement of critical workers*) that usually comes from poorer neighboring countries (D'Orfeuil 2013). The effects of both of these problems have not been fully mapped out or investigated thoroughly, and nor this Thesis claims that it does. However, with this Thesis, an attempt to make suggestions for the future is being made.



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## 13. APPENDIX

In this part, you can see the selection of questions that were synthesized for the interviews. Not all questions have been asked, and some have been added after the conclusion of some of the interviews. Like the values that act as inhibiting or motivational factors. Furthermore, some of them are more of themes and less of questions so that the interviewees were able to express themselves with me simply steering the conversation. Lastly, as the interviews were exploratory to an extent several themes were attempted to be explored and thus some of the material did not fit to be added in the analysis of this paper.

### **Background**

- Number of family members - the educational level of them and if there is a generational change of the previous generation
- Status quo? (Owner or tenant?) Size of land and type of cultivation, if there is a change, from what and conversion year
- The ratio on the economics - Is it the main income? If not, how is this being diversified?
- The number of people that are working on the farm? Both family and employees.
- Form of transfer? And the length. What is the influence of the previous owner?

### **Main theme.**

#### **Priority (subtheme)**

- Stuarts (of nature) or businessman?
- Environmental concerns?
- Incorporation of technological means? And for what scope?
- Have consumers' concerns taken into account in the mode of production?
- What is a farmer? That generated the: What constitutes a good farmer?

#### **Economy (subtheme)**

- Is the choice of mode of production that has to do with labeling the product for pricing?
- Taxes?
- RATIO on the income (subsidies, family member working outside the farm, renting equipment, agro tourism, cooperation with the municipality, and more)

- Workload and income – satisfactory relation? In contrast to other social and economic groups do they share the same lifestyle and level of life?
- Professional hazards?
- Security and insecurity factors?

**Collaborations? (Subtheme) machinery sharing-system?**

**Social aspect? (Subtheme)**

- Do they have a similar social network as in the past? Or we the previous owner?
- Is this network expands in other aspects as well? Business?
- Separated social networks?

**Perhaps if the weather permits a small walk on the farm expanding in the farmers' lifeworld**

Allow the individual to speak and demonstrate his-her business.

- Favorite spot and why?
- Nature?
- What is nature in your land or next to it or close to it and why?

**Future**

- Expand? – preserve? Or exit? And is expanding the only way to move forward? Alternatives?
- Becoming the master of production and distribution as well?
- Concerns on climate change and the adaptability of your business? Perhaps an opportunity?
- Who will follow you?

**With the given situation of the pandemic,**

- What do you think that the impact will be to the sector?
- The workforce and goods-products are either immobilized or slow-moving or their value is re-estimated (flowers). Is this a good time to re-evaluate the sector's functions and dependence or even the structure or the production ratio?
- As even the UN expresses fears about food shortages is it wise a top to bottom plan to be created and implemented to assure the achievement of national goals towards food security?